

SHINING HARVEST

STUDIES IN
YOGA, PHILOSOPHY AND MYSTICISM

M. P. PANDIT

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SECTION ONE

YOGA

YOGAVASISHTA

The *Yogavāsishṭha* is a unique work in several ways. It is a philosophical treatise but has a literary form bristling with stories, illustrations and elegant similies. Many of its passages have found their way into the gnostic literature of the land. It is pervaded by a strong religious and ethical spirit but it subscribes to no particular sect; it is catholic¹ and strikes a synthetic note. It is also a guide-book for practical discipline to realise the high knowledge it embodies; it is a book on Yoga. It has been hailed as a *siddha-śāstra*, a testament of realisation. The thorough analysis it makes of the different states of existence, individual and cosmic, and the scientific manner in which it explains the evolution of the universe, make it out as one of the most rational² expositions in Indian spiritual literature. And it has an occult content. The different states of consciousness that one traverses after death, the way to pass through them, the possibilities of entering into other bodies, these and other allied subjects are dealt with with a wealth of imagery and symbolism.

1. After observing that all views of different times in different countries lead to the same Truth, it declares wisely: "That by which he makes progress, is his way. Any other neither suits, nor pleases nor profits." (Vib.130 2)

2. It strikes a new note in declaring: "Even works of (ordinary) men should be accepted if they are rational and promotive of Knowledge; what are not so shall be discarded even though they be of sages. What is rational shall remain." (II 18.2)

Whoever wrote it, Sri Aurobindo notes, he must have been a man of remarkable occult knowledge.

We do not know who exactly is the author of this work. Tradition ascribes it to Valmiki, the poet who gave Ramayana but it is obviously not meant to be taken literally. Scholars are not agreed on the period of its composition either. Dr. B. L. Atreya, a recognised authority on the subject, puts it round about 600 A.D. anterior to Shankara and even to Gaudapada.¹ This treatise has exercised a great influence on a number of scholars of the Advaita school of Vedanta like Sureshwara, Vidya-ranya, Narayan Bhatta etc. and its echoes can be found in their works e.g. Manasollosa, Vivekachudamani, Bhaktisagara and others. Many verses from this work are bodily incorporated in a number of later Upanishads.

According to tradition, this work consists of 32,000 verses, but the extant versions have only

1. Discussing the date, the learned Doctor points out that modern scholars tend to fix the period between the 9th and 13th centuries A.D. But he is of the considered opinion that this work must have been earlier than Shankara, Gaudapada and Bhartrihari. The influence of Yogavasishta on these thinkers has been profound; verses from YV. and its strong influence are to be found in Vivekachudamani, Svatmanirupana, Atmabodha, Shatashloki, Aparokshanubhuti, Mandukya Karika, Vairagyashataka and Vakyapadiya. It is obvious, says, Dr. Atreya, that the work must have been written before Bhartrihari, before 650 A.D. In this work is found a presentation and harmonisation of the Yogachara and Madhyamika schools of Buddhist thought. Hence it could not have been done earlier than the propagation of these philosophies. There is a trace of Kalidasa (*Meghadoota*) in one place (Vib.116.2-3). The most probable date is after Kalidasa and before Bhartrihari,

about 28,000 verses.¹ It is divided into six Sections: Renunciation or Disgust, Seeking for Liberation, Creation, Preservation, Quiescence, Nirvana or Absorption (2 parts).² It comprises the instruction given by sage Vasishtha to prince Ramachandra at a critical turn in his career. Ramachandra, it is said, was overcome by serious doubts about the meaning of life and its purpose on the eve of his going with Vishvamitra to help him counter the harassments from evil elements. He lost interest in everything and Vasishtha, the family Guru, was called in to deal with the situation.

The narration runs in the form of dialogues, box-stories and illustrations and touches upon a wide variety of topics concerning man, world and Reality. The argument is essentially one of Monistic Idealism. We shall see in this brief study what is its philosophy and what the means it prescribes to translate that philosophy into practice.

II

There is only One Reality and that is the Absolute, the Brahman. This Sole Reality cannot be defined, cannot be spoken of. It is neither being nor non-being nor anything in between. It is nothing, yet it is All. Unattainable by mind and by speech, it is the Nothing beyond nothing, the Bliss beyond bliss. (III.116.23) It transcends all the categories of human thinking, Time, Space, Casualty. It is the

1. It is 27,637 in the excellent edition of the Nirpaya Sagara Press.

2. *Vairāgya, Mumukshu, Utpatti, Stithi, Uprāsāna, Nirvāṇa Kāṇḍas.*

supreme transcendence. But it is not confined to its transcendence.

The One is also the All. Within Brahman, the Absolute Consciousness, Siva, is contained All in potentiality. When the Brahman wills to manifest any of Its potentials, It issues as Brahma, the Creator, the Cosmic Mind out of which spring forth the myriad forms that constitute the Universe. The Power by which Brahman, the Absolute Consciousness gives rise to Brahma and thus projects the creation, is inherent in It. It constitutes the nature of that Consciousness and in its creative aspect it is called variously, Prakriti, Ichha, Maya. This creative power and the Pure Consciousness that is Brahman are identical as wind and air, as heat and fire. (VIb.84.3).

Brahman issues forth on the wings of his Consciousness-Power, in creative sport, *līlā*, as *Brahmā*. And *Brahmā*, the Cosmic Mind assumes form limited in time and space. It is done in *līlā*; there is no compulsive factor of any kind e.g. cumulative *karma* of past etc. to urge the manifestation. Each form so projected by the Mind, in the Mind, depends for its existence on the Will in the Mind. As related to the Mind, Brahma, all forms are dependent, transitory. But in themselves they are so much concentrated in their own being that they are not aware of their dependence and regard themselves as entities in their own right; they live and thrive in this ignorance of their real nature as emanations of the One and go deeper and deeper into the consequences of their psychological state

of separativity. As a direct result of this vitiating ignorance there arises Desire, and action based upon that Desire, for their separate aggrandisement and thus Desire forges the bonds of pleasure and pain.

Like birds bound by ropes, they get into the hold of the world bound by cords of *vāsanās*, desires and hopes. Imagining limitation in the Self that is Infinite and Immeasurable, one binds oneself thereby. Other than this forgetfulness of Self, there is no other reason for repeated births and deaths. Ignorance of the Self leads to delusion and the knowledge of the Self leads to the highest bourn of all Knowledge.

To cut this false knot of ignorance and come out of this state of separation from the real Self is the object of all high living.

This realisation of the Self is not to be had by going to places of worship or undertaking pilgrimages to far off centres. The Self is there within ourselves and within we have to go. The real Lord resides within every one. Search for Him within and not without. Make an earnest and patient effort therefor, *cirābhyāsa*. It will not do to depend either on the teacher or on God's Grace alone. The Divine is seen neither by means of Scripture nor the teacher. He is realised by your own self through your purified intelligence -(VIa.118.4). It will not do either to resort to Sastras and know things by the mind. "There is only one real source of Knowledge and that is your own direct cognition which is the base and source of all other *pramāṇas*, even as the sea is

of all waters" (II.19.16). And live by what you so *know*. And the way to it, to learn to cast your whole life in the mould of what you are given to *know*, is Yoga.

III

Thus the problem is essentially psychological and it is mainly on that level that the *Yogavāṣiṣṭha* seeks to work out the solution. It is recognised, however that man does not consist of the mind alone—though he is primarily a mental being¹—and that he feels and acts just as he thinks. The process of eradication and self-realisation is accordingly possible on three lines corresponding to the intellect, the feeling and the vital dynamism of man. One may start on the way most natural to him and proceed straight to the goal on that alone; or as it often happens, the other ways too join² or can be made use of, contributorily. The goal of all is the same, realisation of one's ultimate Self.

The three lines of development are: (1) affirmation of the Sole Reality (2) control and processing of the mind in the rejection of what is not the Self, (3) control and checking of the *prāṇa* which throws the system into perpetual activity. (VI.69.27.)

In the first, the method of *brahmabhāvanā*, there is a constant meditation on the truth that one is

1. And that is why the author gives preference to the method of concentrating on the mind. "Of these three methods the best is stilling of the mind, quickest to effect, resulting in Peace." (VIa.69.29)

2. *ekasminneva samsiddhe samsiddhyanti parasparam*, when one is ready, the others interact into readiness (VIa.69.40)

identical with the Brahman, the infinite, the Ultimate Self. By incessant dwelling on this Idea and activising it in all the movements of mind, life and body, a process of changing into what one thinks upon begins to operate and the consciousness slowly sheds its nature of limitation and grows into the nature of Brahman. Side by side with this affirmation of the Reality of the Self, there is a denial and rejection of all finite objects as the non-Self. Not only outer objects, but inner things too, like thoughts and willings. In thus separating the Self from the non-Self at every step, there develops a kind of isolation of the Self, *kevalībhāva*, a Self which is realised to be above both the objective and subjective formulations in life, drawing the seeker to awake to his oneness with it.

The second method is to control the mind and dissolve it in the infinity of Brahman. Mind is the nave of the wheel of this world-play. Mind is the real cause of bondage and to slay it is the most direct and the speediest way. How to annihilate the mind? There are, says Vasishta, many methods which can be tried singly or in combination.

Accustom the mind to think in the way of the Truth, to arrive at a conviction of the unreality of the thought-waves that constitute its normal existence and of the ego that holds them together. Stop the play of imagination. Root out this process of ideation, *sankalpa ucceda*. Cancel each thought by summoning its opposite. This discipline of *bhāvanāparyaya*, gradually brings to an end the hectic

activity of imagination, by pitting against each positive idea, as it rises, its very opposite, the negative, leaving ultimately only the Self at the back of both. Cultivate distaste for sense-objects. Train the mind to realise the illusoriness of the objects of sense-pleasure and half of its activity impelled by desire will drop. Renounce Desire. Desire is at the root of bondage and it is desire that dominates the mind. The mind loses its prop the moment desire is eliminated. Spot out and eliminate the ego. Ego is what constitutes our self-made boundary and shuts us off from the Infinite that is our true nature. Cultivate and promote the movements of enlargement and the ego will dwindle. Cultivate the spirit of detachment which alone can free the mind from helpless subjection to the onslaughts of pleasure and pain, like and dislike. Detachment is negative. When that is achieved, proceed to require *samata*, equanimity. Then the little personality of your ego-led mind will gradually spread out into an impersonality which is the threshold of Infinity. Renounce all in the mind. That is more important than to renounce with the body. Eliminate the sense of possession or claim for possession from the mind. Lead the mind by process of meditation and concentration into the state of *samādhi* wherein the mind could lay off into the Utter Reality and accustom itself to be lost in identity with the Pure Self.

The third method is to control the movement of *prāṇa*, the current of life-energy. Prana is the dynamic energy that flows in the system and drives

both the body and the mind. If the mind is to be quieted and regulated into submission to the Self, it is enough to get hold of the vitalising energy, control it and learn to suspend its ceaseless operations which keep the mind in activity. There are many ways of doing it. They all proceed through the control and regulation of Breath and come under the subject of Pranayama. *Yogavāśiṣṭha* lays stress on the elongation of the moments of *kumbhaka*, outer and inner, when the breath is expelled and the next breath is not yet taken, when the breath is fully drawn in but not yet thrown out. These moments of cessation from breathing should be seized and lengthened into periods. Prana is thereby regulated and with it is brought under the control the mind; when the flowings of *prāṇa* are arrested, the mind too ceases its activity and becomes aware of the Peace and Silence of the Self.

Any or all of these methods may be tried. What is important is to dissociate oneself from the world of the senses, to disengage oneself from the formations of Ignorance and grow into an awareness of the One Real which is ultimately realised to be none other than one's own Self. The *Yogavasishta*, in common with some other standard works on Yoga, speaks of seven stages in the growth of self-realisation:

- 1) the stage in which man recognises the futility of his narrow bounds of life and aspires for a wider and higher way of living leading to freedom, *śubhecā*;

2) when he begins to think and cogitate over the nature of whole world and the Self, *vicāraṇa*;

3) when as a result of this deep thinking his mind loses its grossness and gets subtilised, thinned out, *tanumanasa*;

4) when one becomes concretely aware of the existence of the real Self in oneself, *satvapatti*;

5) when attachment to things of the world falls away and there is non-attachment, *asamśakti*;

6) when objects are realised to be non-existent apart from the Real, *padārtha-abhāvana*; or when one becomes aware in his mind that he is the Ultimate Reality itself, *padārtha bhāvana*;

7) and last, the stage when there is a definite experience of identity with the Real in one's consciousness, the Fourth State, *turyaga*, above the three states of waking, dream and sleep.

IV

We have seen what are the seven steps, *saptabhūmikās*, of Knowledge, Jnana. The Yogavasishtha also speaks of seven steps of Ignorance, Ajnana, the graded steps by which Ignorance comes to be against a background of Knowledge.

“These seven different states do interpenetrate one another and receive different appellations.

As the one Jnana, which is nameless and stainless, is the substratum and the generating Bindu (or the seed Bija) of all those which pass under the

names and actions of Manas, Jiva and others evolving and flourishing, hence the first state is called *Bindu* (or *Bija*) - *jāgrat*. This is the first or primary state.

After the incipient manifestation of Jiva, the feeble conception of the differences of "I and He" and "Mine and Thine" which arise then, they not having existed in it before, is the second or upper *jāgrat* state.

Then the third state is inducted, when, after repeated births, the conceptions of the heterogeneity of man and the universe do concrete in the individual, *mahā jāgrat*.

Jāgrat-svapna is that state in which the mind holds undisputed sovereignty over the things of the world in the *Jāgrat* state through previous effects, and overpowered by such objects, whether seen or unseen before, revels in delight in them. This *svapna* state is enjoyed in the *Jāgrat* or waking state and is of various kinds, through the experience of various delusions, such as the misconceptions of water in a mirage, silver in mother-o'-pearl, two moons and others.

Then in the fifth state of *svapna*, a review is made of the innumerable events which one passes through in a moment as if in a dream or reverie, and the individual remembers them in his normal *jāgrat* state.

The sixth state is *svapna-jāgrat* in which one in the waking state, in trying to recollect things

long past has that *svapna* consciousness, which makes the past things to be clearly in recollection now, not as in *svapna*, but as in the *jāgrat* state.

A *jīva* after crossing these six states, reaches *susupti* state in which its intelligence finds all these *avasthas* (states) to be but inert and beset with sore pains. All the worlds seem to be (or are) generated out of and perish in the mist of Maya in the *avasthas* or states.

These seven states of Ajnana have countless ramifications, each being divided a hundredfold. Thus are the seven *Ajnana-bhumikas*. (III.117)

One meets in this work unexpected turns of thought, conceptions and patterns at variance with the ascetic spirit that gained the upper hand after the period of spiritual efflorescence in India. Note for instance, a eulogy of woman who is commonly—though quite mistakenly—considered as the gate to spiritual perdition. "A woman of noble descent can by her own effort lead her husband out of the beginningless and endless deeps of Delusion. Neither the scripture nor the preceptor nor the Mantras can uplift man spiritually as a loving wife of noble descent can do. She is to her spouse a companion, brother, well-wisher, servant, teacher, friend, wealth, happiness, refuge, slave, all at once." (VIa.109.26-28)

Notable are its warnings against the standing danger of *gūḍa-rāsanaś*, latent desires or sense-impressions that are gone underground, against lapsing into indolence on the plea of 'fate' which is

nothing but the projection of our own past effort that can be countered by 'the ram' of present effort. Stories are related to show how Time is relative, how Thought has an existence of its own. Altogether a work that deserves to be better known than it is.

TRIPURĀ RAHASYA

THOUGH famous as an authoritative work on Advaita Thought, this ancient treatise is remarkable for the manner in which it relates the Advaita to the philosophy of Shakti which looks upon the universe as a projection of the Supreme Reality whose nature is Absolute Consciousness. It takes the main elements of the Advaita sadhana and the fundamental postulates of the Shakta system and presents a harmonised synthesis for practical application to achieve the real object of life. It uses the very terms that are used in the Vedanta and the Tantra but at times with different connotations.

Consisting of a little over two thousand verses, it forms the second part, *Jñāna khānda*, of what is known as *Haritāyana Samhitā*, purporting to give the instruction received by Sumedha, son of Harita, from Parasurama who in turn had received it from Dattatreya. Now, before we go to the subject matter of the work, it will be useful to know who is Dattatreya. For the legends that have grown round this name are so many and even today there are people who have authentic evidence for the granting of *darśan* by this Master-Yogi at different places—ranging from Girinar in Central India to the ghats in the southernmost regions of this vast country.

Whether all the accounts that are current are fully correct or not, one fact stands out. And that

is Dattatreya is unique in that he figures in such different traditions as the Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shakta, Natha. In certain parts of Maharashtra, the Personality of Dattatreya overflows from the Hindu religion into the Muslim. Dattatreya, again, is not a recent arrival dating only a thousand years, as said by some. The Mahabharata refers to him in more than one place. The Epic narrates the help received by Kartavirya Sahasrarjuna from Dattatreya in establishing his supremacy in war and in peace.¹ There is mention of Dattatreya in some of the later Upanishads² where he is described as the son of Rishi Atri and Anusuya, an Avatar of Vishnu, who rose to be the Teacher of Yoga for the whole world and continues his mission as an Avadhuta *par excellence*. This combination of asceticism of Shiva with an avatar of opulent Vishnu is to be noted for its synthetic note.

According to the Puranas,³ Dattatreya was the son of Atri the sage. He was the supreme Narayana, who gave Himself, *datta*, to Atri, son of Swayambhu, and incarnated as *Dattatreya*.⁴ He is described in some places as the sixth avatar of Vishnu and in some as the fourth, whose advent dissipated the Darkness of confusion and godlessness and who revitalised the Vedic tradition. *The Brahma*

1. MB. Vana Parva, 115.12, Shanti P. 49.36, Anus. P. 152.5 etc.

2. Sandilya, Bhiksha, Avadhuta, Jabala and Dattatreya Upanishads.

3. Agni, Markandeya, Brahma, Vayu, Vishnu etc.

4. Atri putram mahatmanam santptmanam akalmasam, dattatreyam tanum vishnoh purana joah pracaksate. (*I'āyā Purana* 2.9.75)

Purana records that at the instance of his father Atri, Dattatreya did tapasya invoking Maheshwara and received the liberating knowledge from Lord Shankara. He popularised Yoga as the direct means of fulfilling the highest object in life and sought complete freedom for the liberated from all laws of society. His tradition was carried on by his four disciples, Alarka, Prahlada, Yadu and Kartavirya.

He is generally represented as having three Faces¹ of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara signifying the three functions of creation, preservation and destruction. He holds in his hand four Dogs, Hounds of Knowledge, the four Vedas. In some traditions—recorded in the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*—he is pictured with a wine jar in one hand and a woman in the other. This is done with a purpose: to emphasise the utter freedom of the Divine from all determinations in the play of Manifestation. He is a Siddha Devata heralding the inner Victory.

A powerful tradition of the Shaktas (worshippers of the Divine as the Mother of All) claims to be derived from Dattatreya and some of their texts hold him in the highest reverence. He is worshipped as the inaugurator of the *Upāsana* of Sri Tripura Sundari. The present version of the *Parasurāma Kalpa Sūtras*—a premier authority among the *Kaulas*—is said to be the condensed version of the bigger *Tripuroṣṭi paddhati* of 18,000 verses by Dattatreya. In this mode of worship and

1. We say generally because there is mention of him as single-faced, *ekamukha*, in many places and there are idols with one face only.

approach to the Divine, the Supreme is conceived as the original Mother—She who is prior, *pura*, to the Three, *tri*, Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshwara. And the Mystery of this *Tripura*, the Adishakti—Her Being and Her Becoming—is made intelligible to the human race by Dattatreya in the *Tripurā rahasya*.

II

There is One abiding Self of All; it is Pure Intelligence, transcendent of every creation. She is, says the text, the Supreme Force, Majesty, Tripura which is called “Brahma in the Vedas, Vishnu by the Vaishnavas, Shiva by the Shaivas and Shakti by the Shaktas. There is indeed nothing but She.”¹

When She chooses in Her free will, *svatantra*, She manifests: She takes a double poise in extension, a poise of consciousness illumining what is self-poised in front. The consciousness that illumines is the *Śiva Tattva* and what is so held in that illumination is the *Śakti Tattva*. When both the Tattvas together encompass what is in incubation as the “I”, it is *Śadāśiva Tattva*. At a further remove from the original Status, the sentient, there is a stress on the ‘insentient’, the object-side of the illumination: *Īśvara Tattva*.² The investigation of the last two stages is pure Vidya, *Śuddha Vidyā Tattva*. In fact all these five Tattvas are pure because they are all yet in an undifferentiated condition. Thereafter

1. XIV.44-45.

2. Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra, are further developments, aspects of Ishwara.

commences the progressive differentiation leading to the predominance of the apparently insentient over the sentient: the reign of *Māyā* begins. The sentient contracts and is pushed into the background as the Purusha who is enveloped by five limiting sheaths, *kancukas*: *kalā* (doership), *vidyā* (knowledge), *rāga* (desire), *kāla* (time) and *niyati* (regulation). And the collective karmic force at the back of the present creation constitutes itself as the Prakriti which manifests in three state of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep. She is known as *Prakṛti* in deep sleep and as *Citta* in other states. This Chitta again is "tripartite according to its functions, namely ego, intellect and mind. When influenced by the three qualities, it manifests in greater detail as follows: by *sattva* (brightness), it becomes the five senses, hearing, sight, touch, taste and smell; by *rajas* (activity), speech, hands, feet, organs of excretion and of procreation; by *tamas* (darkness), earth, air, fire, water and ether."¹

Thus all is a manifestation of the Many from an Original One. The world or worlds that are manifest are as real as that which manifests them. "Denial is absurd.....Can the world be erased out of existence by the mere denial of it?"²

There is one Basic Consciousness that formulates itself through several processes, *vimarśa*, into a diversity of forms. Each centre of consciousness is confined by its Ignorance which is the final result of

1. XIV. 76-77.

2. XXII, 100-101.

the self-limiting deployment of the One Consciousness and lives exiled from its own truth. To dispossess oneself of this disabling Ignorance and realise one's true nature which is nothing else than the supreme transcendent consciousness is the object of human life.

III

After a number of births, a long long series running into lakhs—one gets the human birth. There too, after passing through many more births and as a result of good tendencies acquired during several lives, man begins to awake to the problem and meaning of life. This awakening must be helped to grow into a quest by keeping the company of the wise. Holy company, association with the wise, paves the way¹ for emergence out of the bounds of native ignorance into the freedom of Self-Knowledge. Thence forms a desire for emancipation. "Nothing can be achieved without it. Study of philosophy and discussion on the subject with others are thoroughly useless, being no better than the study of arts. For the matter of that, one might as well hope for salvation by a study of sculpture and the practice of that art. The study of philosophy in the absence of a longing for salvation, is like dressing up a corpse.

"Again, a casual desire for emancipation is also vain. Such desire often manifests on learning of the magnificence of the emancipated state...The desire

1. It is the company which determines the future of the individual (III.10).

must be strong and abiding, in order that it may bear fruit. The effects are in proportion to the intensity and duration of the desire. The desire must be accompanied by efforts for the accomplishment of the purpose. Then only will there be concerted effort...Such an effort is fruitful and is preceded by indifference to all other attainments. Starting by discarding pleasures as impediments to progress, he develops dispassion and the desire for emancipation, which grows in strength. This makes a man engage in the right efforts in which he becomes thoroughly engrossed."¹

Along with this will should be developed a faith, an immovable faith in the reality of the Goal and the sureness of the Path one is led to. "Believe before you aspire", says the scripture.

Such an awakened man should take to the path of introspection, *vicāra*, into the true nature of oneself and of the universe. "Enquiry is the root cause of all, the first step for the great attainment."² But for sustained *vicāra* to be possible, the mind must be turned inward; its restless flow of thoughts outward must be arrested. For "as long as thoughts crop up, so long the turning of the mind inward is not accomplished. As long as the mind is not inward, so long the Self cannot be realised. Turning inward means absence of desire. How can the mind be fixed within if desires are not given up?"³ Unless the mind is freed from the vitiating hold of desire, no

1. XIX. 35-46.

2. VI.30.

3. II.51.

true dwelling on the Self is possible. The mind must be made pure. Purity of mind is more important than concentration of mind. "Realisation of Self requires absolute purity only and no concentration of mind."¹

It is indeed extremely difficult to fulfil these conditions by our effort alone. The *Tripurā Rahasya*, in common with other Indian Scriptures, points to the agency of *Grace* which works out for man what he cannot do otherwise. Invoke the Grace. The means to do so is to worship the Divine, worship with devotion and ardour.² For, when the supreme Devi is well pleased with the worship of the devotee, She turns into *vicāra* in him and shines as the blazing Sun in the expanse of his Heart." "He with whom God is graciously pleased, is endowed with Mahavidya, the supreme knowledge by means of which his crossing the Ocean of Maya is certain. Surrender yourself to the Divine. Surrender directly and unhesitatingly to Him. He will ordain the best for you and you need not ask for it. Among the methods of approach to God are: (1) worship to overcome misery, (2) worship to gain wealth, (3) worship without motive. The last one is, verily, adoration of Truth."³

Other methods are also put forward as serving the supreme end, but they are bound to fail in their purpose if the Lord's Grace be not forthcoming."⁴

1. XV.85.

2. XVI.47.

3. II.19.II.70.

4. VII.50.53.

The Grace of the Supremo is omnipotent and no law, no destiny can stand before it. "Predestiny or Law is powerless before Him." "I am now telling you the secret of accomplishment. Of all the requisites for wisdom, Divine Grace is the most important. He who has entirely surrendered himself to the Goddess of his own Self is sure to gain wisdom readily. This is the best of methods. This method does not require other aids to reinforce its efficacy, as other methods do for accomplishing the end."

And this is the scheme of liberation :

"One learns true devotion to God after a meritorious life continued in several births, and then worships Him for a long time with intense devotion. Dispassion for the pleasures of life arises in a devotee who gradually begins to long for knowledge of the truth and becomes absorbed in the search for it. He then finds his gracious Master and learns from him all about the transcendental state. He has now gained theoretical knowledge, (*Sravaṇa*). After this he is impelled to revolve the whole matter in his mind until he is satisfied from his own practical

1. VII.31.32.

2. VII.60.. On the question of Destiny, the declarations of the *Rahasya* are strikingly modern: "The current notion that one cannot escape one's destiny is applicable only to the weak-spirited. Yogis who practise control of breath conquer fate. Even fate cannot impose its fruits on yogis. Destiny seizes and holds only the coward. Conforming to and following nature, destiny forms part of nature. Nature again is only the contrivance for enforcing God's Will." (VII.62-65).

knowledge in harmony with the scriptural injunctions and the teachings of his Master. He is able to ascertain the highest truth with clearness and certitude, (*Manana*). The ascertained knowledge of the Oneness of the self must afterwards be brought into practice, even forcibly, if necessary, until the experience of the truth occurs to him, (*Nididhyāsana*). After experiencing the Inner Self, he will be able to identify the Self with the Supreme and thus destroy the root of ignorance. There is no doubt of it. The Inner Self is realised in advanced contemplation and that state of realisation is called *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*. Memory of that realisation enables one to indentify the Inner Self with the Universal Self, (*Pratyabhijnā Jñāna*). That is the Oneness of the Self, the same as the identification of the transcendence of the one with that same one in all the diversities of the world apparent to each individual. This destroys the root of ignorance, instantly and completely.¹

With the elimination of Ignorance there dawns the true state of one's existence—the state of the eternal Self. "Realisation is not attained by going far, but only by staying still; not by thought but by cessation of thought."²

IV

In the course of this development of thought and its presentation in the form of stories, parables,

1. XXI.6-9.

2. XVII 63-70.

Galva dūram na tat prāpyam sthitā prāpyam hi saktadā, na tat vicārya vijñeyam a-icārāt vibhāsate (IX.32).

discussions, etc., the treatise makes interesting classifications among the seekers, among the disabilities that beset man, among the Jnanins and sages.

The seekers are divided into three groups:

The best: those who realise at the very moment of hearing the truth. Their ascertainment of truth and contemplation thereon are simultaneous with their learning. Realisation of truth requires no effort on their part.

The middle class: by whom wisdom is gained but slowly and gradually by the process of learning of the truth, conviction of the same, meditation and finally samadhi.

The lowest class: who need many births to achieve the object of liberation.¹

Past *vāsanās* exercise a stranglehold on the seeker. They are grouped into three categories:

Aparādha (fault) of diffidence or want of faith in the teachings of the Guru and the scripture and a wrong understanding of them due to mental egoism.

Karma (result of actions) which overweighs the mind with past impressions or *vāsanās* rendering it dull and incapable of contemplation on the Teaching.

Kāma (desire) which engulfs man entirely and keeps him ever engaged in pursuit of its fulfilment to the exclusion of everything else.

How are these failings to be eradicated ?

“The first of them comes to end on respectfully placing one's faith in holy books and the master. The second (results of actions) may be ended only by Divine Grace which may descend on the person in this birth or in any later incarnation...The third must be gradually dealt with by dispassion, discrimination, worship of God, study of holy scriptures, learning from the wise, investigation into the Self and so on.”¹

The Jnanins too are of three classes: the best, the middle and the lowest. “Of these, the last know the Self and yet are influenced by the pleasures and pains accruing to them according to their *prārabdha*. Jnanins of the higher order even while reaping the fruits of their past karma, are however firmer in their internal happiness like men inebriated with drink. Jnanins of the highest order are never detached from the enjoyment of their bliss even if confronted with a million times more *prārabdha*; they are not surprised at the most unnatural and

1. XIX.30-33.

Read also - “Want of faith has its root in unfavourable logic. Give it up and take to approved logic as found in holy books and expounded by a Guru. The enlightenment becomes possible and faith results.

The second propensity, namely *desire*, prevents the intellect from following the right pursuit. For, the mind engrossed in desire, cannot

himself above desire, above grief, above hate, above pleasure, above excitement. For what can touch him who breathes in the intoxication of the divine love, who stands still as it were in its grip and whose delight is entirely within himself ?

But such a supreme Bhakti does not come without effort. Bhakti arises there where the impulse of desire and activity in things of the world for happiness — on earth or in heavens — is controlled and surrendered to the Will of the Lord. Side by side with this surrender of active will, there is called for a single-minded dedication to the Lord and a complete indifference to all that is antagonistic to that dedication. And this total dedication implies abandonment of all other supports.

Negatively, indifference to all that is contrary ; positively, engaging oneself in activities — secular and religious — that are conducive to the growth and development of this exclusive reliance on God. Counsels of the Wise shall not be given the go-bye. Even after the Bhakti has taken firm root these counsels shall always be cherished, for, otherwise there is the danger of fall. There is no need either to give up the activities necessary for everyday life. They shall be carried on in a different spirit, in consonance with the governing motif of utter dedication to the Lord.

Different authorities speak of Bhakti in different ways. Vyasa, son of Parashara, says it is fondness for worship and the like. Garga says it is loving participation in the celebration of the

glory of the Lord, listening and narrating. Sandilya insists that in true Bhakti this ardour shall not disturb the inner bliss of the soul. To Narada, however, Bhakti means a total consecration in all one's activities and a supreme anguish at the slightest forgetfulness of Him. This is not just theory. There are, he says, instances of the kind, for example, the celebrated Gopis of Brindaban whose dedicated love for the Lord is well-known.¹ Even in this type of complete identification, one shall not forget the Glory of the Lord. For if that were forgotten, then the love would be like the human love of the paramour. In the latter the so-called love is self-regarding; it is concerned with one's own pleasure unlike the divine love for the Lord which rejoices in the Joy of the Beloved.

The Way of Bhakti is superior to that of Action, of Knowledge or of Yoga. For, truly, Bhakti is the fruit of all of them. All action done for the Divine finds its acme, its crown in Love for the Divine; all unfolding knowledge melts ultimately into Love for the Divine; all Yoga culminates in a union of Love. Further the humility of the devotee is dear to the Lord who will have none of the egotism of the doer or the self-consciousness of the knower or the self-exerting preoccupation of the practisant.

What is the means to attain to this true Bhakti? Some would have it that knowledge is the means while others say that both knowledge and devotion

1. *Vide Bhagavata (X 30-44)*: "Their minds given to Him, talking of Him, activities centred on Him, identified with Him, chanting only of His qualities, they remembered not their own homes."

miraculous happenings; they are not elated by the greatest pleasures nor depressed by the worst miseries. They are always peaceful and calm within, although they appear to act like common folk."¹

The best of the sages, says the Master, is "he whose nature is to remain without effort."²

engage in a spiritual pursuit. The abstraction of a lover is well known to all; he can hear or see nothing in front of him. Anything said in his hearing is as good as not said. Desire must therefore be first overcome before aspiring for spiritual attainment. That can be done only by dispassion. This propensity is manifold being in the forms of love, anger, greed, pride, jealousy etc. The worst of them is pursuit of pleasure which, if destroyed, destroys all else. Pleasure may be subtle or gross. Neither of these must be indulged in, even in thought. As soon as the thought of pleasure arises it must be dismissed by the will-power developed by dispassion. In this way, the second evil propensity is overcome.

The third, known as dullness resulting from innumerable wicked actions in preceding births, is the worst of the series and hardest to overcome by one's own efforts. Concentration of mind and understanding of truth are not possible when dullness prevails.

There is no remedy for it other than worship of the Goddess of the Self.....He who unreservedly surrenders himself to Me with devotion, is endowed with all the requisites necessary for Self-realization." (XX,87-100).

1. XVIII. 162.
2. XXI.29.

NARADA BHAKTI SUTRAS

Tradition has it that during a severe soul-crisis in the life of sage Vyasa, Narada—the divine ‘singer of ultimate ecstasy’—had a memorable meeting with him which led to his writing the *Bhāgavatam* celebrating the glory of the Lord. The *Bhakti-Sūtras* are said to form part of the instruction given by Narada at that time. Unlike most of the other sutra literature, these 84 sutras are comparatively easy to follow without the aid of commentaries. They deal in a systematic manner with the subject of Bhakti broadly under the following heads: (1) The nature of Bhakti (2) Speciality of this path *vis a vis* other sadhanas (3) Means of Bhakti (4) Manifestations of Bhakti (5) Ways of men who embody the highest Bhakti.

What is Bhakti? It is not any sentiment based on fleeting feelings or an attitude cultivated under compulsive considerations of awe, expectation and the like. It is, in its true nature, a selfless, causeless, flowing of love for God. It is of the form of intense love, *parama prema*, for God. That love alone gives to man his rightful fulfilment, contentment and a sure transcendence over death. For, once this love is awakened and takes possession of oneself filling the being with God, death dissolves into a shadow.¹ Attaining to this Love, man finds

1. Vide *Saṅkṣya*: He who lives in God becomes immortal (3).

depend upon and reinforce each other. But Narada holds that Devotion is its own fruit.¹ Self-caused, self-existent, it blossoms spontaneously. It is an eternal Rasa. It manifests itself; it is not produced.² Supreme Bhakti is thus 'not a means to an end but an end in itself.' It is something that is there naturally; only one awakes to it. Hence Bhakti, supreme Love, is the surest lever for liberation.

1. Neither cessation of evil nor Moksha is the end of true Bhakti. The end of Bhakti in its highest intensity takes the form of divine Love. This is the position of the Bhagavata Dharma, *bhaktireva paramaḥ puruṣārthah*.

2. This conception differs, it may be pointed out, from the viewpoint of some Sanskrit rhetors who regard Bhakti as a *bhāva* which is producible under appropriate conditions. Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj's remarks on the topic will be found interesting :

"Achyuta Raya in his *Sahityasara* (I.4 134-137) refers to the two rival theories regarding the nature of bhakti, viz. (a) the one connected with the school of Sandilya and his followers who claim it as a *rasa*, and (b) the other rhetoricians who consider it to be a kind of *bhava*. In reconciling the two views he observes that both are right. Thus we learn from the *Gita* (XII. 13-14), he says, that Primary Bhakti is synonymous with *Jivanmukti*; and this is confirmed by Vidyaranya's statement in the *Jivanmuktiviveka*; *Jivannmuktiah sthitaprajno viṣṇu-bhaktasca kathyate*. Consequently it may be placed under the category of Santa Rasa, so that its rejection by Alankara writers as a distinct *rasa* is easily explained. But the devotional literature accepts it as a distinct *rasa* in view of the fact that it is a kind of *Vṛtti* with the one Universal Self as its object. This of course represents a slightly different standpoint. Really speaking, therefore, there is no inherent contradiction between the views of the devotees and those of the rhetoricians. As the commentator points out, bhakti is twofold, primary and secondary. To the rhetorician the primary bhakti is identical with Santa *rasa* and the secondary one is merely a *bhava*. To the devotee on the other hand Santa itself falls under the category of bhakti and primary bhakti is essentially a *rasa*." (Introduction to A NEW BHAKTI SUTRA in Vol. II, P.W. Sarasvati Bhavan Studies.)

What are the conditions to awaken and give shape to this innate Bhakti, love of the soul for the Divine? To give up sense-objects and also to give up attachment to them. It will not do only to give up objects physically; that would be simple enough; even the mental and the vital longing for them must be eliminated. There should be, secondly, a focussing of one's consciousness in ceaseless adoration and worship of the Divine. Even when engaged in mundane activities, the devotee shall keep his ear listening to the Lord's Glory and his tongue speak only of it.

But all these are secondary means. The main factor that awakens this Love and develops it is the grace of the great or as in rare cases, a fragment of the direct Grace of the Lord. That is why the company of the great is to be sought. It is difficult to get but when secured it is unfailing. Their proximity acts like fire to fuel which, whatever its condition of rawness, gets warmed up and ultimately catches fire. Even that company, says Narada, is obtained by the Grace of the Lord. In fact there is no difference between the Lord and the great who are given to Him. Therefore attain to them, attain to them.

Positively the company of the great. Negatively abandonment of the company of the evil. Association with the evil elements shall be given up in all circumstances. For it activates, even if it does not cause, desire, anger, delusion, forgetfulness, loss of intellect and ruin of all. These

tendencies may be there originally as but ripples; but by reason of this association, they swell into an ocean, *larangāyitā apīme sangāt samudrāyanti*.

These are the veritable agents of Maya, the delusion to which men in general are subject. If you seek to surmount this ocean of Maya, you shall give up attachment to objects; seek to serve the great; leave the ego; resort to a solitary place; root out the bonds of the world; transcend the three gunas; give up your occupation to acquire and to preserve; relinquish the fruit of works; renounce preference for works also and cross beyond all dualities; renounce even attachment to the Vedas i. e. the letter of the scriptural injunction. Only so can you attain to pure, ceaseless Love for God. Only then can you cross, and not merely yourself cross but also enable others to cross, the ocean of Maya.

By what marks can Bhakti be known? The nature of true Bhakti which is Love is indeed indescribable. It is, says Narada, like the experience of taste by the dumb. One can only feel it, not speak of it. It cannot be described but it can be seen shining in those who hold it in themselves. If it can be described at all it may be done in this manner; it is above the gunas (or void of attributes); void of desire; growing with every moment; incessant; subtle and of the nature of inner experience. Once this Love is realised, one sees nothing but that, hears nothing but that, speaks of nothing but that, thinks of nothing but that.

Thus far we have spoken of supreme devotion, primary (*mukhyā*) Bhakti, which is ineffable, whole, in a word, utter Love. But such a devotion does not come all of a sudden. It is the culmination of a movement of devotion which starts at some point, in some form, and evolves through various gradations before it matures into the supreme devotion, *parā bhakti*. This developing Bhakti is called *aparā*, other than the supreme. Also known as *gaunī*, secondary, it is threefold according as it is governed by the three *gunas* or the three classes of devotees. Devotion which is characterised by *tamoguna* is moved with evil intent towards others, by *rajoguna*, is attached to temporal ends, and by the *sattva* is attached to knowledge and happiness. The *sattvic* devotion is higher than the *rajasic* and the *rajasic* higher than the *tamasic*. Similarly there are three types of devotees: *ārta*, he who is distressed in the absence of the favour of God, *jīnāsu*, seeker of knowledge from God and the *arthārthi*, he who seeks material gain from God. Of these the *ārtha* is higher than the *jīnāsu* and the *jīnāsu* higher than the *arthārthi*.

This is the path of Bhakti. It is the easiest, the path that can be self-trodden without requiring external direction or confirmation. It is the easiest because its way lies through peace, through ecstasy of joy.

While the man of devotion shall not be despondent over the suffering and misery in the world as he has surrendered all—his self, the world and the very Laws—to the Lord, still he should

continue to carry out the duties of his station in life, dedicating the fruits of such activity to the Lord and exerting himself to complete this dedication in all the parts of his being.

And there are things of the world of which he shall beware: he shall not engage himself in talks of sex, money and of those who deny or oppose God. So shall be given up egoism, ostentation. If these elements of desire, anger or egoism persist they are to be directed to the Divine and surrendered to Him. Thereby they are consumed.

So purified and uplifted above the three aforesaid gradations, devotion converts itself into a supreme state of Love. Love of the eternal servitor for the Master, *dāśya*, love of the eternal spouse for the Lord, *kānta*.

Chief among the devoted are those who are absolutely single-minded in their dedication. When they speak of the Lord among themselves, *regarding* the Lord in each, their voice is choked, their hairs stand on end, eyes streaming. They sanctify whole households, in fact the very earth. It is they who impart sanctity to places of pilgrimage, turn all actions into auspicious acts, vest scriptures with authority. They do so because they are full of Him.

The Path of Devotion is open to all. Among the devotees there is only one community — the Community of God. They have no distinctions of caste, learning, form, race, wealth or function, for they are all His.

If you aspire to grow in the Way of Devotion, avoid all debate. Vast is the scope for views which are legion and no conclusion is final. Do not waste energy or time in controversy. Read and meditate upon authentic scriptures of Bhakti. Engage yourself in those activities which promote and intensify this devotion. Do not let even a fraction of a second go waste. For, after all the time inevitably spent in pursuit of happiness, pleasure and pain, desire and gain, what remains is but little. Cultivate helpful qualities of non-injury, truthfulness, purity, compassion, faith and the like. Aim to occupy yourself at all times with all your being, exclusively, free from distraction, in the adoration of the Lord. When so lauded and invoked, the Lord does manifest and give the realisation to the devotee.

Devotion is the supreme means, indeed devotion is the supreme means to the Eternal.

Devotion is one but it takes several forms. Contemplation, hearing, narrating the glory of the Lord create a constancy of feeling, a flow of adoration. This constancy, *māṭhā*, yields a certain relish or enjoyment, *ruci*, which changes into fondness, *āśakti*. This may be centred on the majesty of the Lord, His traits of opulence, heroism etc., *guṇa-māhātmya-āśakti*, or on the beauty of His Form, *rūpa-āśakti*. There follows a natural liking for worship, *pūjā-āśakti*. Even when there is no active worship there is a constant dwelling in thought; — *smaraṇa-āśakti*. All these movements

lead inevitably to a close personal relationship which first takes the forms of love of Service to the Lord, *dāsya-āsakti*, love of His companionship, *sākhyāsakti*, parental love for Him as a child, *vātsalya-āsakti*, love of Him as a Beloved, *kānta-āsakti*. The personality of the devotee has by now become sufficiently processed in the way of self-consecration and there is an impetus to surrender himself totally in His Being, *ātma nivedana-āsakti*. This leads to complete absorption in Him *tanmaya-āsakti*. This is the state of *samādhi*, *bhāva*, which the Lord manifests to the devotee. *Bhāva* yields to *Mahā-bhāva* in which Love takes the form of anguish at the slightest feeling of separation from Him, *parama virāha āsakti*. Certainly, these are not all the possible forms of the efflorescence of divine Love. What are mentioned are only the typical ones. We may add also that they need not and do not always develop in this sequence. Some of them may appear simultaneously, some not at all. But the goal is always the same, Bliss of Union.

NADA YOGA

In an interesting passage of *Varāha Upaniṣad*, it is stated :

Of the senses, mind is the master. Of the mind, *prāṇa* (life-force) is the master. Of *prāṇa*, Laya (absorption) is the master. Resort to that master, Laya. Void of activity, void of modification, is the Laya of the yogins. With all volition rooted out, without the least remnant of movement, the Laya which is beyond mind and speech, is to be attained in oneself. Once attained to it, the yogin never forfeits the vision of Brahman, however much he may be occupied for the moment in hosts of objects, like the dancer ever intent on keeping safe the pot on her head in spite of all attunement to the notes of song, cymbals and instruments. One who aspires for the Empire of yoga should give up all thinking and *with attention pursue the Nāda alone.*¹

What is this Nada which leads to Laya, absorption, merger of the human consciousness into the Divine? How does the pursuit of Nada lead to the spiritual Expanse ?

II

Sound, *śabda*, is the body of Brahman, *śabdāt-makam brahma*. It is from the Sound-Body, *śabda-brahman*, that the whole creation has issued out (*rāg*

eva viśvā bhuvanāni jajñe). To reach this Sound-Form is to reach the Brahman. But the Sound that is the Body of Brahman is not the sound that is heard by the human ear. This Sound Creative is a far subtler Sound of which our material sound is a distant echo. There are several gradations between that Sound and ours. The ancients speak of Four distinct steps or stations of the original divine Sound, *śabda* or *vāk*¹ in the process of its evolution into human speech. 'Vāk is measured out in Four Steps; of these four divisions of steps, three are established in Secrecy: they are not manifested. Men speak only the fourth step of the speech.'

*catvāri vāk parimitā padāni tāni vidurbrahmaṇā
ye manīṣiṇaḥ*

*guhā triṇi nihitā nengyanti turīyam vāk manuṣyā
vadanti*² (R. Veda. I. 164.45)

1. *Śabda* in the Tantra and *Vāk* in the Veda.

2. 'The four steps (*catvāri*, *maḍyama*, *paśyanti*, *parā*) are taken to be, first, the material plane, next, the plane of Life-force that penetrates, circumsfuses and sustains it, itself remaining above in its station higher than that of the material existence; and the third from here is a plane in which the Mind-principle is dominant and is in relation to the plane of the Life world, in the same way as the latter is to the world of Matter. If we take the first plane, the material world, as a gross existence, then the second is the subtle and the third is the causal. Giving birth to these three planes, there stands above these the great Causal, *maḍa brahman*, in which reside in an undifferentiated state all rhythms of sound to build the worlds and planes, all play of Light to direct the lines of rhythm which are real creators not only of objects of the world severally and in their totality but also manifestations of the gods and Cosmos'. (Sri T. V. Kapali Sastriar: *Lights on the Ancients*, P. 29)

The highest Speech, called *Parā Vāk*, related to the Brahman as Unmanifest is beyond the manifested order of things. Next is *Paśyantī*, the seeing Speech, which sees but does not yet express. Third is *Madhyamā*, what is in between the *Paśyantī* and the next. The fourth and the last is *Vaikhari*, the gross speech with which we are familiar. Each lower step of the *Vāk* in transition is less subtle than the previous, higher one. As the original unmanifest Sabda comes down to find expression on this material plane, it takes on a grosser and grosser aspect at each stage, till on the human level it condenses itself in the materially audible sound. The whole movement is a living process and therefore it is possible to trace each human sound or word back to its Source. In so doing, we go back step by step from the gross to the subtle, till we arrive at its pristine source which is the sheer Body of Brahman.

Thus each sound, each letter expressing a sound, each word which is a combination of these sound-letters, represents the Brahman however distantly, however indirectly. By following any sound to its ultimate source one can arrive at Brahman, the Self, of which it is the vibrant Body in its original state. To so trace the source of sound by going from the gross to the less gross, from the subtle to the more subtle states, till one comes to its subtlest station beyond the manifest condition, is the essence of the *Nāda Yoga*, the Yoga of Inner Sound.

The normal *śabda* audible to the human ear, the word which expresses meaning, *artha*, to man is the

vaikharī, sound in the grossest form. This *śabda*, as it is, is gross, impure. If by some means it is purified and restored to its original, immaculate nature and potency in one's consciousness, then that consciousness is automatically transformed into the nature of the original *śabda*, so arrived at. It is in this sense that *śruti* declares, 'One word, well known, perfectly used, becomes the Cow of Plenty in the higher world.' *Ekah śabdaḥ samyag jñātaḥ suṣṭhu prayuktaḥ sarge loka kāmadhug bhavati*. Each state of *śabda* is related to the corresponding state of the Self which it expresses: thus the *vaikharī* is related to the *Vaiśva Atmā*, the next subtle state to the *Taijasa* and so on. And one who cultivates and follows this fine course of the *śabda* in its gradations is naturally brought into relation with the corresponding states of the Self.

Thus a *śabda*¹ is concentrated upon; and by japa, meditation or other means prescribed by the Guru, it is gradually purified, shorn of its gross nature; and on the trail of its vibrant note, *nāda*, one gains entry into its own higher and subtler condition, the *madhyamā* state. When the practicant attains in his consciousness to this state of *madhyamā vāk*, he also attains to all that is natural to that state by way of power, harmony, subtlety etc.

1. It can be, in theory, any *śabda*. But in practice only those sounds or words are chosen that have already acquired a special potency by reason of being treated to ascesis and purification by adepts and established in the human consciousness as readied means of ascent for others. Of such kind are mantras like the *praṇava*, *bijas* etc.

The consciousness opens to the *anāhata* sound — the causeless Nada that goes on incessantly behind all produced sound, and the purified *śabda* acquires a life, a *caitanya*, and the person gets the power to become aware of any mind he chooses irrespective of temporal or spatial barriers. Further pursuit of the *nāda* and more subtilisation of the *śabda*, brings him to the *paśyanti* stage where the Light that sees and shows is manifest. The Word reveals itself as a divine embodiment, the Deity, the seeker attains the power of direct sight, he becomes a Rishi. Yet further is the *parā* state, the unmanifested state of Sound which bases all the manifest states. Here all vibrations cease and one finds oneself in an absolute, ineffable state which is none other than his Self, the Brahman.

III

This Nada, the subtle hum of Inner Sound, is incessantly active in the Cosmos¹ behind the gross physical surface, in several forms in its several

1. The mystics in all the traditions the world over, are familiar with this Music of the Spheres.

'All the world reverberates with echoes of the Sound, but thou needst to open the doors of thy ear. It is infinite, knows no beginning, nor end and therefore it is called Anahad. Had there not been this Sound, the world would not have come into existence. Listen to the melodious song and forget thyself in ecstasy.' (Shah Niyaz)

'Hear the heavenly sound. The ear of the soul will become the seat of revelation; these revelations are the subtle glimpses. Were I to speak to you of these melodies the soul of the dead would rise from the tombs. Bring your ear close to it, it is not far off. Bring the regions of the firmament under your feet and from high listen to the melodious song'. (Maulana Rum)

stationings on their respective planes. It is a part of the creative process. And this organization of the Sound-manifestation is to be found in the human body as well. In it also there are stations or centres of the Four-stepped *Vāk*, the Creative Speech, which are woven into their system by the Tantras in a remarkable manner. Sri Kapali Sastriar writes: 'The Tantriks while admitting the principle of the division, apply it for practical purposes dealing with the subject from a psycho-physical and psycho-spiritual point of view; naturally therefore, since the subtle centres play a vital part in their yoga, they locate the *Vāk* of the states in the nervous system. They name it *parā*, *paśyantī*, *madhyamā* and *vaikhari*. The first and the supreme source—the primordial *Parā-Vāk* is beyond; it is unmanifest, but turned towards manifestation; it is the great Causal *mahā-kāraṇa*, and as such its centre is at the bottom of the spinal column that supports the nervous system. The bottom is the *mūlādhāra*, the root-centre of the physical being. Next is the *paśyanī vāk*, the word that perceives, and this is the causal located in the navel centre; then is the *madhyamā vāk*, the middle, the Word in the intermediate subtle region between the navel and the throat which last is the region for the express speech called *vaikhari vāk*.' (*Lights on the Ancients*)

But man is not normally aware of this course antecedent to and resulting in his usual audible speech, because he is extrovert, turned outward in his faculties and the channel or *nāḍī* in which this fine current of *nāda* flows is shut to him. His being

moves only along the *nāḍis* of Ida and Pingala, through the currents of inspiration and expiration. When by means of appropriate yogic practice the current of breath through these *nāḍis* is arrested, the movement of life-force is steadied, the mental waves are checked and the closed mouth of the Sushumna *nāḍi* begins to open. This is the *Brahmadvāra*, door to Brahman, in which is to be directed the life-breath and followed with the mind. Slowly one begins to hear the *nāda*, the subtle sound. This sound is to be assiduously followed in its freed movement, from centre to centre, till it leads and disappears in the *parā* state where stands unveiled the Ultimate Self.

There are a number of methods to start on the practice of this Yoga of Sound, *Nāda*. The classical way is to sit in a perfected *āsana*, a sitting posture in which you can sit for any length of time without the least discomfort, erect and immobile; go into the *śāmbhavi* (or *īaiṣṇavi*) *mudrā* where you look out and yet see none, for the attention is fixed within, *antar lakṣyam bahir drṣṭiḥ*; resort to the lever of Breath for opening the Sushumna; listen to the subtle *nāda* coursing within it and join yourself with the life-force to it in its upward ascent. But all cannot do it straightaway and so a number of aids are recommended e.g. *japa*, *prāṇāyāma*, closing of the ears with fingers and concentrating within etc.

There are broadly four stages in this *sādhana*, the first beginning, *prārambha avasthā*, when you

have definitely crossed the gross belt and begin to hear the *anāhata*, unstruck sound, a sound like that of an ornament, *kvaṇa*, in the heart. A glow of health, sweet fragrance exudes from the body. Peace and purity begin to establish themselves. The second stage is the *ghaṭāvasthā*, when breathing appears to stop and all becomes one enclosed like a jar. The sound of a drum is heard in the throat centre. The body acquires a peculiar beauty. The next stage is the *paricayāvasthā*, the state of recognition, wherein the Nada is close to greet the Self. *Prāṇa* stations itself between the eye-brows and there the report of a *mṛdanga* is heard. Siddhis crowd upon the practitioner. Diseases of mind and body fall away and a natural happiness fills the being. The last and the perfect state is *niṣpattī avasthā*, when the Prana shoots above the *ājñā* and enters the Brahmarandhra. This state is heralded by the notes of a Flute and the mind becomes one with the Self, one with Creative Will.

The whole course is sketched out graphically in the *Nāda Bindu Upaniṣad*:

‘The yogin being in the *siddhāsana* and practising the Vaishnavi-mudra, should always hear the internal sound through the right ear. The sound which he thus practises makes him deaf to all external sounds. Having overcome all obstacles, he enters the *turiya* state within fifteen days.

‘In the beginning of his practice, he hears many loud sounds. They gradually increase in pitch and are heard more and more subtly. At first,

the sounds are like those proceeding from the ocean, clouds, kettle-drum, and cataracts; in the middle state like those proceeding from *mardala* (musical instrument), bells, and horn; at the last stage, as those proceeding from tinkling bells, flute, *viṇā* and bees. Thus he hears many such sounds more and more subtle.¹ When he comes to that stage when the sound of the great kettle-drum is being heard, he should try to distinguish only sounds more and more subtle. He may change his concentration from the gross sound to the subtle, or from the subtle to the gross, but he should not allow his mind to be diverted from them towards others.

'The mind having at first concentrated itself on any one sound fixes firmly to that and is absorbed in it. Becoming insensible to external impressions, the mind becomes one with the sound as milk with water, and then becomes rapidly absorbed in *Cidākāśa*.

'Being indifferent towards all objects, the yogin having controlled his passions, should by continual

1. Treatises do not always agree on the nature of the sounds or on their order. The *Hamsa Upaniṣad* for instance, giving a description of the ten kinds of sounds that are heard, states that the *sādhaka* may experience the tenth (rumble of rain-cloud) without the first nine sounds, under special circumstances. It gives an interesting account of the effects experienced in each stage. 'In the first stage, his body becomes *cina cina* (there is felt a creeping movement); in the second, there is the breaking in the body; in the third, there is piercing; in the fourth the head shakes; in the fifth, the palate produces saliva; in the sixth, nectar is attained; in the seventh, the knowledge of the hidden arises; in the eighth, the Para Vak is heard; in the ninth, the body becomes invisible and the pure divine eye is developed; in the tenth, he attains Parabrahman.

THE PRATYABHIJNA SYSTEM

Admittedly one of the oldest of the religious systems in the Indian sub-continent, Saivism has come to stay in three recognised forms viz. *Saṭsthala* or the *Vīra Śaiva Siddhānta*, in the Karnatak, *Śaiva Siddhānta* in the southern peninsula and the *Advaita Śaiva* or the *Trika* Doctrine in Kashmir. It is this last system that is the subject of our present study.

Saivism in Kashmir has been called the *trika* because of the series of triads that are fundamental to that system e.g. *Śiva*, Supreme, *Śakti*, Power, *Nara*, Man; *Śiva*, Lord, *Sakti*, Power, *Aṇu* or *Jiva*, being; *Parā Śakti*, Higher Power, *Aparā*, lower, *Parāpara*, mixed; or the triad of the modes of knowledge: *Bheda*, dual, *Abheda*, non-dual, *Bhedābheda*, dual-non-dual.

The literature of Kashmir Saivism is classified under three broad categories: (I) *Āgamas*, believed to have been revealed by Lord Śiva as Srikantha to Sage Durvasa who in turn had them declared to mankind through his three mind-born sons, Trimbaka, Amardaka and Srikantha. Notable among the *Āgamas* are the *Mālinivijaya*, *Svacchānda*, *Vijnānabhairava*, *Mrgendra*, and the *Rudrayāmala*. Also included in these *Sastras* are the *Śiva Sūtras* ascribed to Vasu Gupta of the 9th century A.D.

(II) *Spaṇḍa Śāstra* develops whatever principles are adumbrated in the *Śiva Sūtras*. The leading text is the *Spaṇḍa Kārika*, of Kallata Bhatta which has been commentated and annotated upon by a number of writers among whom are Bhaskara, Utpala Vaishnava and Kshemaraja.

(III) Then there are expositions of the philosophy of the system justifying to the logical intelligence the truths of the *Trika vis a vis* the various extant doctrines in the field of philosophy. These constitute the *Prātyabhijñā Śāstra*, the Scripture that brings home the *re-cognition* of one's own true nature. Somananda's *Siva dr̥ṣṭi* is considered to be the basic work in this line and the *Īśvara Pratyabhijñā* by his pupil Utpala giving a summarised account of this Philosophy, is rated so high that the system itself came to be known by this name, *Pratyabhijñā*.¹

II

The Ultimate Reality, in this Philosophy, is a Supreme, Something higher than which there is nothing, *anuttara*. It is beyond conception, beyond description. But the same Reality as related to Creation, reveals itself as the Transcendent and the Immanent. It is above the Creation, *viśvottīrṇa*, it is also immanent in the Creation, *viśvamaya*.. It is a Consciousness, pure and supreme, *Cit*. It is

1. The celebrated Abhinava Gupta author of *Tantrāloka* and *Tantrasāra*, has written two *ṛttis* on the *Pratyabhijñā Sūtra* of Utpala. Kshemaraja, author of *Pratyabhijñā Hṛdayam* — giving an epitome of the main principles of the system — is his pupil.

practice concentrate his attention upon the sound which destroys the mind. Having abandoned all thoughts and being freed from all actions, he should always concentrate his attention on the sound, and his *citta* becomes absorbed in it.

‘Just as a bee drinking the honey does not care for the odour, so the *citta* which is always absorbed in sound, does not long for sensual objects, as it is bound by the sweet smell of *nāda* and has abandoned its flitting nature.

‘The serpent *citta* through listening to the *nāda* is entirely absorbed in it, and becoming unconscious of everything concentrates itself on the sound.

‘The sound serves the purpose of a sharp goad to control the maddened *elephant-citta* which roves in the pleasure-garden of the sensual objects.

‘It serves the pupose of a snare for binding the *deer-citta*. It also serves the purpose of a shore to the *ocean waves* of *citta*.

‘The sound proceeding from Pranava which is Brahman is of the nature of effulgence; the mind becomes absorbed in it; that is the supreme step of Vishnu.

‘The sound exists till there is the *ākāśa* thought. Beyond this is the sound-less Parabrahman which is Paramatma.

‘The mind exists so long as there is sound, but with its cessation, the state is one which is above

the mind. This sound is absorbed in the Indestructible and the sound-less state is the supreme step.

‘The mind which along with Prana has its *kārmic* affinities destroyed by constant concentration upon Nada is absorbed in the Unstained One. There is no doubt about it.

‘Many myriads of *nādas* and more of *bindus*—all become absorbed in the Brahma-Pranava sound...

‘And when the sight becomes fixed without any object to be seen, when the *prāṇa* becomes still without any effort and when the *citta* becomes without any support, the yogin becomes the form of the Inner Sound of Brahma-Pranava.

called variously as *Parā Samvit*, *Śiva*,¹ *Paramaśiva*. It is luminous, *prakāśa*. That is not all. The Consciousness is not only self-luminous, but it is equally self-conscious, not only *prakāśa* but also *vimarśa*. *Cit* is also *caitanya*. It is *prakāśa vimarśamaya*. If it were only *prakāśa*, luminous, there would be no movement. It would be like an inert² diamond. But it is instinct with *vimarśa*, it is aware of itself, it surveys itself. And what it so surveys as itself, it is moved, self-moved to manifest. For that is its nature. This aspect of *vimarśa*, this poise of the *Cit* aware of its existence, is the *Cit-Śakti*, *Cit* as *Śakti*, *Cidrūpiṇī śakti*. Thus we conceive the Reality turned towards manifestation as *Parama Śiva*, Consciousness and *Sakti*, Power. The two are not really two, but one in two poises. *Sakti* is *Śiva* in the creative mood. As the Consciousness is Infinite, the Power too is infinite. This Infinite *Sakti* has infinite modes, but of these five are fundamental :

Cit, the power of revelation by which the Consciousness is aglow. In the form of *Cit*, the Supreme is *Śiva*.

Ānanda, the power of the delight, bliss, in the wake of which there comes into operation a perfect freedom, *svāntarya*, to effectuate. In this form, the Supreme is *Sakti*.

Ichā, the Will to manifest. In this form, the Supreme is *Sadāśiva* or *Sādākhya*.

1. In this system, *Śiva* signifies the Reality, not one of the Gods of the Hindu Trinity.

2. *yadī nirvimarśaḥ syāt anīśvaro jadaśca pratayjeta*; if he had no *vimarśa* then He would be without power, inert. (*Parā Pratīkā*).

Jñāna, the power to know, know the ordering of the manifestation. In this form, the Supreme is *Īśvara*.

Kriyā, the power to create and assume any form. In this form, the Supreme is *Sadvidyā* or *Śuddha vidyā*.

It is through the operation of these Saktis, the activity of the One Cit-Sakti, that the Universe comes to be as a *prasara*, spread-out, as an *unmeṣa*, opening out of the Supreme. The universe, in this system, is not *created*. It is an emanation, a putting out of what is already contained in the heart of the Supreme — not indeed in the full-fledged form that we see but in seed-form, in potency, *hṛdaya bijastham viśvamīlat carācaram*.

This manifestation of the Universe out of the Supreme Reality proceeds through a graded deployment of stresses in this *prakāśa-vimarśamaya Cit*, Consciousness that is self-luminous and self-aware, a series of self-modifications, each modification being termed the *tattva*, Principle, of that order of creation.

In this scheme, the primal stir of the Will to manifest, *spanda*, in the Supreme, the *Parama Śiva*, is the first step. This poise of the Supreme in the creative mood is designated the *Śiva*. In this status it is the Consciousness, Cit, that is predominant. The unitive experience in Para Śiva in which the object and the subject (of awareness-experiences) were one and indistinguishable, is now

broken up by the negating Sakti (*niṣēdha-vyāpara-rūpā*). Due to this operation of the Sakti (in the form of *Jñāna śakti*), there is only the awareness of "I". The object so negated is again presented to the experience, no doubt, but as a demarcated "This" *vis a vis* the "I".

Once Siva comes into being, i. e. the urge to manifest throbs into a stir, the other side of the Cit, the *vimarśa*, the kinetic aspect, comes into its own. There is an ebullition of Delight followed by a constant affirmation of the self-awareness in the form of existence. The "I" becomes "*I am*," *aham*. In this stage it is the Ananda aspect that is predominant. This is called the *śakti tattva*.

These two states of *Cit*, it must be noted, are not so much successive as simultaneous..

The next is the stage when there is an affirmation of the Self, the "I" as all "This". "*I am This*", *ahamidam*, the emphasis falling on the "I". This is the *Sadāśiva* or *Sādākhya tattva*, (affirming the *sat*; Existence) where the Will, *icchā* aspect of Sakti is dominant to affirm the *ahantā*, the I-consciousness. The "This" aspect is yet vague. This is known as *nimeṣa*, the state in which the Universe (ideal) is still enclosed within.

Further is the stage where the object or the "This" content of the experience takes fuller shape and calls for emphasis on itself. The experience here is consequently more evocative of "This" which is seen to be "I": "*This am I*", *idam aham*.

This knowledge is the result of the operation of Jnana Sakti which leads at this stage — the stage of *Īśvara tattva*, known as *unmeṣa*, where the Universe is opening out.

Next is the *Sad-vidyā tattva*, where both the "I" and "This" are equally stressed — the stage of transition in which both the subject and the object are distinct and yet one in identity. Both are distinguished, yet they form part of one movement, their relation is one of *bhedābheda*. The experience here is *aham aham*, *idam idam* and the Sakti dominating at this stage is the *Kriyā śakti*.

So far is the *Śuddha Adhvan*, the Pure or Ideal Way, for in spite of a progressive self-modification of the original unitive experience, the whole movement has been in an Ideal sphere, not actual so as to obscure the true nature of the Reality. There has been no real separation between the "I" and "This", *aham* and *idam*, the subject and the object.¹

Now begins the *Aśuddha Adhvan*, the Impure Course, in which the Reality is progressively veiled and there is a growing separation between the "I" and "This". This development is brought about by the intervention of *Māyā*, a mode of Sakti that measures; to measure, it is indispensable to limit and divide and that is what Maya does. It brings in *sankoca*, limitation and the manifestation — both the "I" and the "This", the subject and the

1. These Five are the Tattvas of Universal Experience. Those that follow are the Tattvas of individual experience.

object side — is subjected to this process of narrowing, of limitation and therefore of separation of the one from the other. Maya operates by contracting the Universal modes of Consciousness active in the Five Tattvas of the Universal Manifestation viz. *Cit*, *Ananda*, *Ichhā*, *Jñāna* and *Kriyā*. Thus :

1. The eternality, *nityatva*, of *Cit* is limited by Maya and the *kancuka* of Time, *kāla*, temporal determination, ensues.
2. The all-pervasiveness, *vyāpakatva*, of *Ānanda* is limited by Maya and the *kancuka* of Space, *niyati*, spatial determination, ensues. Included in this is the limitation of the *svātantrya*, freedom, into the law of Causality.
3. The all-completeness, *purnatva*, of *Ichhā*, Will, is limited by Maya and the *kancuka* of *rāga*, desire,—arising from want—ensues.
4. The all-knowledge, *sarvajñatva*, of *Īśvara* is limited by Maya and the *kancuka* of *vidyā*, limited knowledge, ensues.
5. The all-doership, all-powerfulness, *sarva-kārīrtva*, of *Kriyā* is limited by Maya and the *kancuka* of *kalā*, fragmentation of power and efficacy, ensues.

Thus is the manifesting Consciousness subjected to a limitation of Its nature and clothed in the cloaks, *kancuka*, in which the "I" and "This", the subjective and the objective statuses, the Siva and

Sakti, emerge as the Purusha and the Prakriti. Siva comes forth as the *puruṣa*, the individual self-consciousness stationed in every form. His omnipotence, omniscience, amplitude, eternity, omnipresence and freedom — all suffer a diminution as a result of the operation of the Kancukas and he emerges as a limited individual being. Also, what was held together as "I" and "This", two statuses or poises of the One Consciousness, are now—with the incoming of Maya — effectively separated from each other.

Corresponding to the subjective *puruṣa* aspect, is the objective *prakṛti*. Purusha is the experiencer and Prakriti the experienced.

This, in the *Trika*, constitutes the scheme of creation consisting of 36 Principles or Tattvas which we may sum up :

1. *Śiva tattva*
2. *Śakti tattva*
3. *Sadāsiva tattva*
4. *Īśvara tattva*
5. *Sādākhya tattva*
- 6—11. *Māya* with the Kancukas of *Kāla*,
Vidyā, *Rāga*, *Kalā*, *Niyati*
12. *Puruṣa*
13. *Prakṛti* (with three gunas of *saṁtva*, *rajas*
and *tamas*)
14. *Buddhi*
15. *Ahaṁkāra*
16. *Manas*

} *antahkaraṇa*

17—21. Five powers of perception—*jñānendriyas*

22—26. Five powers of action—*karmendriyas*

27—31. Five *tanmātras* of perception

32—36. Five *mahābhūtas*

III

Such is the individual, a product of 36 *tattvas*, a culmination of the long process of increasing obscuration of Reality that is Infinite Consciousness. He has a gross body of the five *māhābhūtas*, a subtle body of eight constituents,¹ the *puryaṣṭaka*, a *prāṇa* dynamism that activates the bodies and at the centre of it all, a Consciousness that forms his self. That self is indeed no other than Siva. But due to the impurities that taint his being, man is ignorant of this truth of his self. The impurity that obscures the truth is of three kinds. The first is the *āṇava mala*, the impurity of limitation which comes to be when the Supreme accepts the will to manifest. In the very act of creation, Siva imposes a self-limitation on his infinity and transcendence and goes into a movement of particularisation, *aṇu-tva*, atomicity. This is a movement limiting the operation of the *Ichhā śakti*. And the effect of *Prakriti*² is constituted of three *guṇas*, strands, *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, which are so to say the projections of the Saktis of Jnana, Ichha and Kriya.

1. *Buddhi*, *ahankāra*, *manas* and the five *tanmātras*.

2. *Prakriti*, in the *Trīka*, it is to be noted, is different from the *Prakriti* in the *Sāṅkhya*. In the latter there is one *Prakriti* with many *Purushas* but in the *Trīka*, each *Purusha* has his *Prakriti*.

Prakriti modifies itself, step by step, from the subtle to the less subtle, till it culminates in gross matter, as follows :

- a) *Anlaḥkaraṇa*, the inner instrument (or apparatus) consisting of *buddhi*, the intelligence that ascertains ;
aḥankāra, the egoity that appropriates to itself ;
manas, the faculty of perception and conception.
- b) Five powers of sense-perception, *jñānendriyas* viz. — powers of smell, taste, sight, touch and audition.
- c) Five powers of action, *karmendriyas* viz. — powers of speech, grasping, locomotion, excretion, procreation.
- d) Five subtle elements of perception, the *tanmātras* : sound, touch, colour, flavour, odour.
- e) These five *tanmātras* in their turn give rise, in varying combinations of themselves, to the Five Gross Elements, *Panca Mahābhūtas* of which the Universe is constituted :

Ether, Air, Fire, Water, Earth.

This contraction, *saukoca*, is termed in this philosophy the *āṇava mala*, impurity of limitation.

The coming of Siva in the belt of Maya (*aśuddha māyā*) gives rise to another type of impurity—*māyic mala*; the limitations imposed by the *kancukas* and the subsequent adjuncts provided to the *puruṣa*, individual jiva, in the form of subtler and gross bodies etc. constitute the *māyā mala*.

A still further impurity that encrusts the true nature of man is the *kārma mala*, the impurity of the Karma he forges at every moment of his life.

To get rid of his bondage in Ignorance, man has to dissolve these three impurities. When these veiling layers of *mala* are eliminated, then alone is it possible for his Consciousness to shine in its true lustre. The *Citta* is rolled back into *Cit*. The *jiva* realises he is *Siva*. That is not all. The realisation broadens itself into the living vision of the whole universe as *Śiva*. *Cidānanda*, bliss of the real "I" Consciousness is followed and completed by *jagad-ānanda*, bliss of experiencing the universe as *Śiva* or *Cit*. This is the full content of liberation.

IV

The *Trika* is emphatic that it is not possible for man to achieve this liberation by his own unaided effort. He is bound by three layers of *mala* and while it may be possible to get a practical release from the *kārma mala* and even from the *māyīya mala*, by means of disciplines and austerities, physical, psychological and spiritual, it is impossible for him to get rid of the *āṇava mala*. For this inherent imperfection is not of the soul's choosing

like the *kārmic* or born of association with the *upādhis*, adjuncts, like the *māyīya*. The *āṇava mala* is something taken on by Siva on himself of his own free accord; He has for reasons of Self-manifestation, imposed on his own *icchā śakti* a diminution, a contraction, and the *āṇava mala* is the inevitable result. Consequently he alone can remove the *mala* that he has taken on. That is why it is *Śiva*, it is his *anugraha*, Grace, that alone can effect the radical release from the *āṇava pāśa*. The flow of his Grace is called, in this Sastra, *śakti pāta*, Descent of Grace.

Grace knows no law. It effects in a trice what appears to be impossible or involving long effort. But there are gradations in the Impact of Grace. In those in whom it descends in full measure, the liberation is instantaneous; in those who receive it moderately, the process is quickened and the progress ensured; in those who receive it least, there is effected an awakening and a start made on the journey Home of the soul.

Grace is one side of the truth. The other side consists of a certain preparation, a measure of equipment to bear the Descent and embody it. The Sastra has four *upāyas*, means, for the purpose. We may describe them briefly under the following heads:

Ānanda upāya: A very rare but possible way in which the impact of the *śakti-pāta* is so massive and intense that there is a flood of bliss accompanied by a radical elimination of all impurities. In a

moment as it were, the veil is lifted and the realisation of one's own true nature as Siva and of the universe as the same Reality begins to vibrate naturally. When the moment arrives, any occasion serves the purpose e.g. the instruction of the Guru, a striking experience in life etc. We may observe in passing that such transformations are not happenings of chance or accident or caprice, but are the consummation of labours in previous births awaiting fruition in the present.

Āṇava upāya: A means where personal effort, *puruṣakāra*, plays a predominant part. The body, the *prāṇa* and the mind are worked upon by prescribed methods of discipline and subjected to courses of purification, and reorientation of their energies. Worship, ritual,¹ control of *prāṇa*, direction of the mental faculties inward by meditation, concentration² etc. are used in varying degrees. The crucial movement, however is the opening of the *Madhya*,³ which means the *Suṣumnā* in this context, and its enlivenment following the arrest of the flow of *Prāṇa* and *Apāṇa* in the *Idā* and the *Pingalā*, the *vāhcheda*. The climax of this movement is the attainment of *Cidānanda*.

1. This is also called *Kriyopāya* because of the several *kriyās* of that kind involved in the process

2. of the mind in the region of the heart in rhythm with the rise and fall of *prāṇa*. *ādyanāḥ-koṭi-nibbāḥana*—between the heart and distance of twelve fingers therefrom.

3. *Madhya* is a technical term in *Trika* meaning the central or basic factor of operation. It means different things in the different *upāyas*.

Sākta upāya: This proceeds on more mental and psychological lines aimed at the mergence of the individual consciousness in the Supreme Consciousness, *samāveśa*.¹ It is also called *Jñānopāya* because here the effort is through a replacement of lower and imperfect knowledge by a progressively fuller and truer knowledge — *pratibhā jñāna*. *Vikalpas*, mental determinations are first purified and then eliminated making the field clear for the True Consciousness to shine. Key-formulas or *vākyas* that 'I am Siva' or to the effect that "All is my Self" are meditated upon till they become part of the texture of one's mind and the sense of duality is dissolved letting the consciousness find its natural base in the *Parā Samvit*, the *Madhya*. This power of purified Knowledge as also the *Mantra-śakti* which is sedulously cultivated, bring about the rise of the *Kundalini* without other aids and the *sadhaka* is led to the goal of Self-realisation.

Sāmbhava upāya: This is meant for a smaller category of seekers, those who proceed mainly through *vicāra* and *dhyāna*, enquiry and meditation. The *Madhya* to be attained here is the Pure I-Consciousness, *akṛtrima aham*. The *sadhana* begins with the discipline of meditation on the *Panca Kṛtya* and proceeds through the practice of *Vikalpa Kṣaya*.

1. One of the means adopted towards this end is *śakti saṅhoca* and *śakti vikāśa*. The Consciousness that is normally turned outward and darts at objects through the senses is repeatedly drawn back and turned within towards the Self. This is *saṅhoca*. *Vikāśa* is when the consciousness is firmly held within, concentrated upon the Self, though the senses are allowed their customary activity.

Panca Kṛtya is the Five-hold act of Siva which is reflected in the individual. Even as Siva is constantly engaged in the five acts of Creation, Maintenance, Withdrawal, Concealment and Grace, the individual creature too is occupied in the fivefold act of (1) perception of an object, *sr̥ṣṭi*, (2) retention of what is perceived, *stithi* (3) enjoyment of its *rasa-samhāra* — during which the object is absorbed as it were in the consciousness (4) rising of the impression even after the object is removed, *vilaya*, having the effect of concealment or obscuration of pure consciousness, (5) complete absorption of the object into the original *Cit*, *anugraha*. By constantly observing this activity in oneself with the background of Siva and his Fivefold Act, the consciousness is gradually processed into higher and higher forms till it is sublimated into pure *Cit*.

The other method is of *Vikalpa kṣaya*. The mind is always full of thoughts, ideas, mentations of all kinds. The practice recommended is to relax the mind, to cease to think of anything, but all the while keeping the awareness. A more positive way is to concentrate within the heart and vigilantly keep out every *vikalpa*, till the mind grows into a condition of natural thought-less-ness, a condition in which the Self, the *Madhya*, the Supreme Consciousness, would emerge and come into its own. In some cases the Guru awakens, by his *dīkṣā*, the *nirvikalpa* Knowledge — the Knowledge in which there is no mental activity —, the *vikalpas* are destroyed and the union takes place with the Higher Consciousness.

Whatever the method or methods, the aspirant passes through a series of statuses corresponding to the extent of the impurity eliminated and to the state of the consciousness attained. The ordinary *jiva*, for instance, is subject to the three *malas*: he is *sakala*. One who succeeds in removing from himself the *kārma mala* is called the *pralayākala*; he is still subject to *māyīya mala* and the *āṇava mala*. He who passes beyond the belt of *Maya* and is free from the *māyīya mala* is called the *viññānākala*. He is still tainted with the *āṇava mala*; his position is above the *aśuddha māyā* but below the *Śuddha Vidyā*. The atomicity, *āṇava mala*, is shed step by step as the *jiva* crosses from one *tattva* to another in the manifestation of the *Śuddha Māya*, in the measure in which the distinction (ideal though it be) between the *aham* and *idam* gradually gives way to complete absorption in *purnāhantā*, the Full "I" ness.

He is the *Mantra*, in the *Śuddha Vidyā tattva*, who experiences no doubt a distinct diversity but all in a Unity of the Self. In the *Īśvara tattva*, he is *Mantraśvara* to whom the Universe is as distinct as the Self and yet is identical with the Self. In the *Sadāśiva Tattva*, he is *Mantra Maheśvara* who experiences everywhere "I am This" with a stress on the "I" aspect of the truth. The Universe is there but only as my Being. Higher than that is the highest, the *Siva Pramātā*—the state of Consciousness where all is not one with *Siva*, but *is Siva*. Some authorities, however, hold that after the *Mantra Maheśvara* are statuses of *Śāktya* and *Śāmbhava*.

THE NATHA TRADITION

Though the beginnings of this Cult are lost in legend and the innumerable sects into which it has proliferated all over the land has made it difficult to determine the exact form of its original formulation, still there are certain broad features of its philosophy and its practice that make it possible to lay hold on the central truths of this important branch of Indian spiritual effort. There are indeed a large number of treatises in the various vernaculars of the regions where it has held sway,¹ but by and large, they all base themselves on the Teachings of Gorakshanath which are said to have been expounded by the great Teacher himself in the *Siddha-Siddhānta-Paddhati*.² Whether the said work was actually written by Gorakshanath and whether all the doctrines therein were enunciated by one person of that name, is a question that cannot be decided with any finality. It is enough for our purpose to note from this treatise that the *Nātha Sampradāya* (tradition) has certain basic philosophic postulates and a system or combination of the essentials of the different systems of Yoga to translate the Knowledge into practice. This tradition looks upon the whole universe as a direct

1. Notably in parts of Eastern Bengal, Nepal, Upper India, Central and Western India.

2. There are a number of other works in Sanskrit on the subject but they are mostly based upon the *Paddhati* in one way or other.

manifestation of the Divine Reality on different levels, the Many proceeding from the One in purposeful evolution, and posits the goal of life as the full realisation of this truth by each individual in oneself. The means to awake and realise this true state of one's existence is a graded discipline consisting of the main elements of Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, Mantra and Laya Yoga.

There is One Reality which is the Ultimate Truth of All. It is Infinite: It has no limits. It is the Sole: there is none other than It. It is Eternal: It has neither beginning nor end. It is Self-luminous: It needs nothing else to reveal It. This Supreme Reality, identical with the Brahman of the Upanishad, is called Shiva.

Though thus Absolute and Indeterminate, Shiva is not bound by this indefinability. He reveals Himself as the All. For the All is nothing else but He: there can be no other beside Shiva, the Sole Reality, *ādrayam*. Shiva has within Himself a Power by which he moves into manifestation. This Power, Shakti, is not something different or subsidiary to Him. It is Himself as Power. Or to put it in another way, the same Reality as the Immutable, the Static, is Shiva; and as the Mutable, the Dynamic aspect, It is Shakti. There is no difference. "Within Shiva there is Shakti; within Shakti there is Shiva. I see no difference between them; they are like the moon and the moon-light."¹

1. *Siddhasiddhānta Saṅgraha* IV. 37

Shakti exists in Shiva and cannot be apart from Shiva. And Shiva always contains His Shakti which may be active or may be not active. In either case the Shakti inheres in Shiva. Similarly the Shakti always carries Shiva. When She acts, She acts in Him, out of Him and for Him. When She does not act, She reposes in herself, that is in Shiva. Thus manifest or unmanifest, the Shiva-Shakti Reality is eternal.

To put it in other terms, Shiva is the Reality as Being, Shakti is the same Reality as Becoming. Both are different poises of the One. The universe is a *Becoming*, a *Self-manifestation of Shiva worked out through His innate Power, Shakti*. Creation ensues in the expansive mood of Shakti, destruction in the mood of withdrawal into Herself, in to Shiva. The Cause of the entire Movement is Shiva-Shakti, *śakti-yukta-śiva*.

And how is the manifestation of the universe brought about?

In the beginning there is only the Absolute, Indeterminate, Pure Being. There is only the supreme Transcendent Shiva, the Luminous Existent Beyond, *Aparam param*. His innate Power, *Nija śakti* is there in Him, identical with Him, as His pure Will, *iccāhmātra*. The Will is pure, it wills nothing. It is formless, eternal, whole, still, unarisen.¹

Next there arises the Impulse to reveal. The Power or the Will gets an urge to manifest what is

1. *Nirbhṛti, nityatva, niranantatā, nisṛṇḍatva, niruḥatva.*

contained within. This Power instinct with the will to manifest is *Parā śakti*. The same Power which as Nija Shakti was indistinguishable from the Shiva is now as *Parā śakti*, distinguishable from the Transcendent Shiva. As has been well put, it exists not as Shiva but in Shiva who is *Paramam Padam*, cognisant. This *Parā śakti* asserts its existence, it is immeasurable, infinite, but yet non-differentiate, un-manifest.¹ The urge to manifest has arisen; it is facing towards, *unmukha*, manifestation, but as yet there is no movement therefor.

Now there is a stir, a vibration, *spanda* within. The Shakti in which this movement has stirred, is called *Aparā śakti*. The *Aparā śakti* goes one step further from the changeless Shiva in the static poise of Being, and tends towards definite movement of revelation. But as yet, there is no outer movement. It is a stir within. It is vibrant, throbbing, clear, disclosive, blooming.² And along with his Shakti, Shiva too emerges more clearly as the illuminer of His active Will. He becomes the very Will, *svecchāmātra*, Himself appears as *Sūnyam*.

The fourth stage arrives when there arises the consciousness of 'I' in the whole movement. When Shiva who was so far an impersonal Spirit, becomes conscious of Himself as the Existent, Stainless, *Niranjanam*, governing His creative Will, as a determining Person, His Power assumes the

1. *astitva, aprameyatva, abhinnaiva, anantatā, avyaktatā*

2. *sphuratā, sphāratā, sphuratā, sphoṭatā, sphurti*

character of His Body. The Shakti here is called *Sūkṣma śakti*. She is impartite, unparcelled, immobile, definite, without distinctions.¹

In the fifth and the last subtle stage, the Shakti reveals itself as a Power that can know, feel and will, *vedanśīla*, and is called the *Kundalinī śakti*. She is perfect, irresistible, fronting towards creation, constituting Herself as the Matrix, and reflecting the nature of Shiva in the forms of Her making.² All that is to be brought out, revealed, is manifested in an ideal state in this step of the Shakti, illumined by Shiva who poises Himself as the Great Self, *Paramātmā*, and Lord of that Ideal Creation.

The Ideal world so created by the Shakti on the move and held by the Kundalini Shakti is the Cosmic Body, *para pinḍa*, of Shiva who as the Soul of this vast body is called the *Para śiva*. This cosmic Body is also called *anādi pinḍa*, beginningless, for it has no beginning as such in Time. The Ideal Creation has no relation with the Time of our conception.

From this ideal formulation of the Shakti there proceeds as a result of further self-variation, self-diversification, self-evolution, the gross creation, *jaḍa-jagat*. "From the *Ādya* (*anādi pinḍa*) comes

1. *nirantaratvam, nairamśyam, naiścalyam, niścayatvam, nirīkalpatvam*

2. *puṇyatvam, pratibimbavatvam, prakṛtirūpatā, pratyangmukhatvam, aucakalyam*

As the Shakti, in each of her Stations, has different attributes, so also the Shiva in each of His poises has different characteristics.

Mahākāśa; from *Mahākāśa*, the *Mahāvāyu*; from *Mahārāyu* the *Mahātejas*; from *Mahātejas* the *Mahāsalila*; from the *Mahasalila* the *Mahāpṛthivī*." And this great material body of the universe is the *Mahā-sākāra-piṇḍa*, the Great Formed Substance. As the Soul of this *Sākāra Piṇḍa*, Shiva is the *Paramātmā*.

Thus far regarding the Cosmos, the universal creation. The next to issue is the *vyṣṭi piṇḍa*, individual formations which are so many individualised self-involvements of the manifesting Shakti. Each individual form is a self-creation of Shiva-Shakti, of which Shakti is the Body and Shiva the Soul. There are indeed a million orders in this creation, but this truth of *śhakti-yukta-śhiva* pervading and constituting each formation is to be found everywhere.¹ In Man this truth arrives at a point of overt expression.

In a sense man the individual is the point of return in the curve of the Manifestation. The entire cosmos with all its principles and powers is reflected, reproduced in a miniature scale, in his system.² No doubt the Shiva-Shakti manifestation

1. *Sattve sattve sakala racanā samvidehā vibhāṭi
tattve tattve paramaracanā samvidehā vibhāṭi
grāse grāse bahula taratā lampaṭā samvidehā
bhāse bhāse bhajati bhavatā bṛhmīṭā samvidehā.*

2. All the regions of the Created Universe are found organised in the human body: the various heavens in the upper body and the nether regions in the lower. The different kinds of beings viz. Gods and Goddesses active in the universe are also active in the human body at their respective centres.

in the universe is repeated in each individual form.¹ But there are different degrees of self-revelation. In man the process arrives at a certain completion. In him there is a consciousness that has developed and is one on the verge of becoming aware of the true nature of its own existence and its purpose. The embodied consciousness begins to perceive and feel that it is but one wave of a mighty pulsation of Shiva-Shakti in manifestation. The Shakti developing in the growing consciousness is ready to greet Her Lord once again in the full blaze of manifestation. The Body and the Soul are close to realising their identity. In fulness of manifestation the Shakti reveals Herself as none other than Shiva Himself.² Further the moment man awakes to this fact of Shiva-Shakti manifestation in himself and the same Shiva-Shakti efflorescence in the universe around, and realises it in his consciousness by an inner identity, he becomes one with the Paramatma. The Shakti in manifestation has completed its round of play and unites once again with the Lord. The finite rejoins the infinite, the temporal the eternal.

1. *Akhaṇḍa parīpurnātmā viśvarūpo mahāśvarah
ghaṭe ghaṭe citprahāśah tīrṅghatīti prabhuḥhyatam.*

Awake to the truth that the Great Lord, infinite Full, Universal in form, abides in the Lights of His Consciousness, in vessel and vessel. (S. S. S. III. 40)

2. *Sarva śaktih yadā sahajena stasmin unmiṣṭinyā nirulīkha-
dāśāyām vartate tadā śivah sū eva bhavati.* (S. S. Paddhati. IV. 1)

When the same Shakti attains to its state of perfect manifestation through its own self-revelation, then She becomes the Shiva Himself.

The process to realise this truth of one's existence, to actualise this perception of the unity of one's soul with the Supreme is the yogic discipline built up by several Teachers, the Nathas of this tradition, *sampradāya*.

All available spiritual knowledge and occult lore is pressed into service. The Science of Hatha Yoga is utilised and developed in certain directions for this purpose. The various *āsanas* and practices of this yoga are resorted to for awakening the latent powers and for a complete mastery of the functions of the body¹ — not only the physical body but also the subtler nervous organism. The body is sought to

1. The Natha conception of the human body in its constitution of centres or chakras, it may be mentioned, differs in some ways from the traditional arrangement of the Tantras. As Dr. Gopinath Kaviraj points out in his interesting study:

"(Their) nine chakras include, besides the well-known six psychic centres, Ghanṭika, Manolaya and Brahmachakra or the thousand-petalled lotus. It may not be out of place to note here that this scheme does not exactly tally with the usual account. The first chakra, for instance is called here Brahmachakra like the last one and is described as a three-folded triangular region below which is *kanda* where *Sakti* is located. This is known as *Kamarupa Pitha*. The second chakra is said to be a four petalled lotus, which represents the *Uddisana Pitha* in the body. The next chakra is the locus of the *Kundalini*. The *Anahata chakra* is usually described as a lotus of 12 petals, but here it is called eight petalled lotus, within which is a bright *linga*, known as *Hansakala*. The *Susumna*, lying between *Ida* and *Pingala*, is the *Anahatakala*. The usual *Ajasa Chakra* is replaced by *Talu chakra*, from which the current of nectar is said to flow. The sixteen *adharas* mentioned here are so many places within the body on which the mind has to be fixed for attainment of different results. The three *lakṣyas* are connected with three kinds of gazing, *urdhva*, *madhya* and *adhab*. The five *vyomanas* indicate the supreme *Akasa* in varying stages of its purity."

be perfected in each limb, so as to give the needed foundation and base for the edifice of Realisation. It is raised to its full potency. There is even an attempt to spiritualise the body in order to provide the proper vehicle for the inner spirit fast realising itself as the Divine Shakti. Once the body is so strengthened and purified, certain methods of Rajayoga are practised, alongside to bring the mind under control and still it into silence.¹ *Mantra-Japa*, *Nāda-anusandhāna* (Yoga of Sound), are all cultivated under the guidance of the *Guru* in order to bring about the *sāmarasa*, equilibrium, of the *Pinda* with the *Pada*, to process the consciousness and lead it to become one with, *laya*, the Divine Consciousness of Shiva-Shakti in all its poises of existence viz. immanent, universal and transcendent.

1. It is to be noted that the traditional eight limbs of the Astanga yoga come in but in an extended significance: *yama* is the endurance of the suffering of duality; *niyama*, that by which mental movements are controlled; *asana*, constant settlement in one's natural state; *pranayama*, what brings stability to *prana*; *prathyahara*, the turning back of the waves of the mental movement from sense-objects; *dharana*, holding to the denial of form to each movement as it rises; *dhyana*, the inner condition in which is experienced the one *Atman* delighting in itself; *samadhi* that in which all Principles are in equal harmony.

“Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism”

A STUDY

“While my eyes were immersed in the golden depths of the Maharshi's eyes, something happened which I dare describe only with the greatest reticence and humility, in the shortest and simplest words, according to truth. The dark complexion of his body transformed itself slowly into white. This white body became more and more luminous, as if lit up from within, and began to radiate. This experience was so astonishing that, while trying to grasp it consciously and with clear thought, I immediately thought of suggestion, hypnosis, etc. I therefore made certain ‘controls’, like looking at my watch, taking out my diary and reading in it—for which purpose I had first to put on my spectacles etc. Then I looked at the Maharshi, who had not diverted his glance from me; and with the same eyes, which a moment ago were able to read some notes in my diary, I saw him sitting on the tiger-skin as a luminous form.

It is not easy to explain this state, because it was so simple, so natural, so unproblematic. How I would wish to remember it with full clarity in the hour of my death!”

Quoting this entry from the *Asian Diaries* of Baron Dr. von Veltheim-Ostrau, the author of this

notable book* describes the radiation that emanates from a body that has undergone spiritual transformation, a feature that is characteristic of the Tibetan Yoga of which this work is an exhaustive exposition.

Lama Anagarika Govinda has had first-hand experience of the practical side of this Yoga and his extensive studies in the original works on the subject have combined to place his writings in a class apart from the others that have been appearing during the last few decades. He owns his debt of gratitude to the great Guru Tomo Geshe Rempoche, who he records, came out of his mountain retreat when he foresaw the troublous times coming over Tibet endangering her precious spiritual heritage and "proclaimed that the time had come to open to the world the spiritual treasures which had been hidden and preserved in Tibet for more than a thousand years. Because humanity stands at the cross-roads of great decisions: before it lies the Path of Power, through control of the forces of nature — a path leading to enslavement and self-destruction — and the Path of Enlightenment, through control of the forces within us — leading to liberation and self-realization. To show this path (the *Bodhisattva-mārga*) and to transform it into reality, was the life's task of Tomo Geshe Rempoche." And in Lama Govinda the Tradition has found a worthy exponent in terms of modern

* *Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*, By Lama Anagarika Govinda.
Pub. Rider & Co.

thought. He has written many treatises on the subject. The present work, particularly, is a classic and his treatment of some of the essentials of this Tradition viz. Mantra, Mandala, Chakras (Lotuses), Inner Fire (g Tum-mo) etc. is not only brilliant but authentically unique in as much as he brings out certain truths that are lost sight of in most expositions of this type.

Writing on the principle of the Mantra, he first gives the background of the theory of Word-Power¹ and explains:

"The latent forces and qualities of earth and water are concentrated and transformed into the higher organism of the plant; the forces of the plants are transformed and concentrated in

1. "The birth of language was the birth of humanity. Each word was the sound-equivalent of an experience, connected with an internal or external stimulus. A tremendous creative effort was involved in this process, which must have extended over a vast period of time; and it is due to this effort that man was able to rise above the animal ..

"Each word originally was a focus of energies, in which the transformation of reality into the vibrations of the human voice — the vital expression of the human soul — took place. Through these vocal creations man took possession of the world — and more than that; he discovered a new dimension, a world within himself, opening upon the vista of a higher form of life, which is as much beyond the present state of humanity as the consciousness of a civilized man is above that of an animal...

"Thus the word in the hour of its birth was a centre of force and reality, and only habit has stereotyped it into a mere conventional medium of expression. The *mantra* escaped this fate to a certain extent, because it had no concrete meaning and could therefore not be made to subserve utilitarian ends "

man ; the forces of man are concentrated in the faculties of mental reflection and expression by way of sound-equivalents, which through combination produce the inner (conceptual) and outer (audible) forms of speech, by which man distinguishes himself from all lower forms of life."

He traces the development of the potent word into the highly concentrated form of the *mantra* which built up a tradition of its own in all ancient civilisations. With the passage of time, its truth got encrusted with ignorance and superstition and lost much of its pristine power. And today, says the author, Tibet is the only country which still cherishes the sacred character of the *word* :

"Here not only the word, but every sound of which it consists, every letter of the alphabet, is looked upon as a sacred symbol. Even though it may serve a profane purpose, its origin is never forgotten or completely disregarded. The written word is therefore always treated with respect and never thrown away carelessly, where men or animals could trample it under foot. And if it is a matter of words or scriptures of a religious nature, even the smallest fragment of them is treated with the respect of a precious relic and will not be destroyed wilfully, even though it may have ceased to serve any useful purpose, but it will be deposited in specially built sanctuaries and receptacles, or in caves, where it is left to its natural dissolution."

To the Tibetan adept, sound is a concrete symbol of the state or the consciousness of that from which it issues. The author quotes a Master :

"This is because these beings and things are aggregates of atoms that dance, and by their movements produce sounds. When the rhythm of the dance changes, the sound it produces also changes. Each atom perpetually sings its song, and the sound creates each moment dense or subtle forms. Just as there exist creative sounds, there exist destructive sounds. He who is able to produce both can, at will, create or destroy."

But the power of the *māntric* word is not to be interpreted in physical terms. He observes :

"It has been said that the power of the mantras consists in the effect of 'sound-waves' or vibrations of small particles of matter which, as one can prove by experiments, group themselves into definite geometrical patterns and figures, exactly corresponding to the quality, strength and rhythm of the sound. If a mantra would act in such a mechanical way, then it should have the same effect when reproduced by a gramophone record. But its repetition even by a human medium would not have any effect, if done by an ignorant person though the intonation may be identical with that of a master. The superstition that the efficacy of a mantra depends on its intonation is mainly due to the superficial 'vibration-

· theory ' of pseudo-scientific dilettanti, who confuse the effects of spiritual vibrations or forces with those of physical sound-waves.

This means that the power and the effect of a mantra depend on the spiritual attitude, the knowledge and the responsiveness of the individual. The *śabda* or sound of the mantra is not a physical sound (though it may be accompanied by such a one) but a spiritual one. It cannot be heard by the ears but only by the heart, and it cannot be uttered by the mouth but only by the mind. The mantra has power and meaning only for the initiated i.e. for one who has gone through a particular kind of experience connected with the mantra."

The inner attitude, inner consciousness is paramount; but the *form* of the Mantra is also important:

"...*māntric* power. That this consists mainly in the purity and truthfulness of the speaker, intensified and made into a conscious force by the solemn form of the utterance, cannot be emphasised too often. Though the inner attitude of the speaker is the main source of power, yet the form in which it is expressed is not irrelevant. It must be adequate to the spiritual content, melodious, rhythmic, forceful, and supported by mental and emotional associations, created either by tradition or personal

experience.”¹

And of all the Mantras, Om is the most important, the seed-mantra celebrated in the Vedānta and the Tantra, in Hinduism and Buddhism² alike. Says the author :

“Om is the quintessence, the seed-syllable (*līja-māntṛa*) of the universe, the magic word par excellence (that was the original meaning of the word *brahman*), the universal force of the all-embracing consciousness...

1. “Form is indispensable, because it is the vessel which holds the other qualities; feeling is indispensable because it creates unity (like heat which, by melting different metals, amalgamates them into a new homogeneous unit); while the idea is the substance, the ‘*prima materia*’ which vitalises all the elements of the human mind and calls up their dormant energies. But it has to be noted that the term ‘idea’ should not be understood as representing a mere abstraction, but — as in the Greek sense of ‘*eidos*’ — a creative picture, or a form of experience in which reality is reflected and reproduced ever anew.”

Note also the author’s further observation :

“If his (devotee’s) faith is not pure, he will not achieve inner unity; if his mind is untrained, he will not be able to assimilate the idea; if he is psychically dull, his energies will not respond to the call; and if he lacks in concentration, he will not be able to co-ordinate form, heart, and mind.”

2. On the place of Om in Buddhism, the writer says :

“Om, therefore, is not the ultimate and the highest in the *māntṛic* system of Buddhism, but it is the fundamental, that which stands at the beginning of the Bodhisattva Way and therefore at the beginning of nearly every mantra, every formula of worship, every meditation of religious contemplation, etc., but not at the end. The Buddhist way, as we may say, begins there, where that of the Upanishads ended; and though the same symbol (Om) is shared by both systems, its evaluation is not the same, since this depends on the position which the symbol

Om had already been used in the cosmic parallelism of the Vedic sacrificial ceremonies and became one of the most important symbols of yoga. After it had been freed from the mysticism and the magic of sacrificial practices as well as from the philosophical speculations of early religious thought, it became one of the essential means in the practice of meditation and inner unification (which is the actual meaning of the term yoga). Thus, from a metaphysical symbol Om became a kind of psychological tool or medium of concentration.....

Thus Om is associated with liberation, either as a means to it, or as a symbol of its attainment. In spite of the different ways in which

occupies in the particular system and in relationship to other symbols belonging to it.

The revaluation of the syllable Om in Mahayana Buddhism can only be understood properly when viewed from the standpoint of the entire system and practice of mantras. For the present it may suffice to point out the liberating mind — and soul—opening nature of the sacred syllable. Its sound opens the innermost being of man to the vibrations of a higher reality — not a reality outside himself, but one which was for ever present within him and around him — from which he excluded himself, however by building up arbitrary frontiers around his illusory ego-hood. Om is the means by which to destroy these artificial limitations and to become conscious of the infinity of our true nature and of our oneness with all that lives.

Om is the primordial sound of timeless reality, which vibrates within us from the beginningless past and which reverberates in us, if we have developed our inner sense of hearing by the perfect pacification of our mind. It is the transcendental sound of the inborn law of all things, the eternal rhythm of all that moves, a rhythm in which law becomes the expression of perfect freedom."

liberation was sought and defined, Om never became the exclusive property of any particular school of thought, but remained true to its symbolical character, namely to express what is beyond words and forms, beyond limitations and classification, beyond definition and explanation; the experience of the infinite within us, which may be felt as a distant aim, as a mere presentiment, a longing — or which may be known as a growing reality, or realized in the breaking down of limitations and bondage.”

II

It is a much debated question whether the Tibetan Tantras are influenced by the Indian Tantra Sastra or it is the reverse. Till recently, it was taken for granted that Tantrism in Tibet (and the North) was not only derived from Indian sources but also governed in its developments from its place of origin. But of late there has been a change in the reading of the position consequent on detailed studies in the Tibetan religious and occult lore. Lama Govinda seems to agree with scholars like Benoytosh Bhattacharya who are convinced that it was the Buddhist Tantras that were earlier and the Hindu Tantras were derived from them. He writes :

“ A comparison of the Hindu Tantras with those of Buddhism (which are mostly preserved in Tibetan and which therefore have long remained unnoticed by Indologists) not only shows an astonishing divergence of methods and aims, in spite of external similarities but

proves the spiritual and historical priority and originality of the Buddhist Mantras."¹

The entire spirit of the Buddhist Tantras, says the author, is different from that of the Indian Tantras:

"The main difference is, that Buddhist Tantrism is not Saktism. The concept of Sakti, of divine Power, of the creative female aspect of the highest God (Siva) or his emanation does not play any role in Buddhism. While in the Hindu Tantras the concept of power (Sakti) forms the focus of interest, the central idea of Tantric Buddhism is *prajñā*: knowledge, wisdom.

To the Buddhist Sakti is Maya, the very power that creates illusion, from which only Prajna can liberate us. It is therefore not the aim of the Buddhist to acquire power, or to join himself to the powers of the universe, either to become their instrument or to become their master, but, on the contrary, he tries to free himself from those powers, which since aeons kept him a prisoner in samsara. He

1. He adds:

"Sankaracharya, the great Hindu philosopher of the ninth century A. D. whose works form the foundation of all Saivite philosophy, made use of the ideas of Nagarjuna and his followers. In a similar way the Hindu Tantras too, took over the methods and principles of Buddhist Tantrism and adapted them to their own purposes (just as the Buddhists had adapted the age-old principles and techniques of yoga to their own systems of meditation) "

strives to perceive those powers which have kept him going in the rounds of life and death, in order to liberate himself from their dominion. However, he does not try to negate them or to destroy them, but to transform them in the fire of knowledge, so that they may become forces of Enlightenment which, instead of creating further differentiation, flow in the opposite direction: towards union, wholeness, towards completeness."

This difference of approach and divergence in the application of Truths which are basically common is illustrated with reference to Chakras, the psychic centres in the human body, and the Nadis—subtle Chakras for the psychic forces around which the Tantra sadhanas are woven. He notes:

"The Hindu system emphasises more the static side of the centres and their connections with elementary nature, by identifying them with the fundamental elements and forces of the universe. This supplies the Chakras with an 'objective' content in form of permanently fixed seed-syllables and their corresponding divine rulers in the form of gods and goddesses.

The Buddhist system is less concerned with the static-objective side of the Chakras, but rather with that which flows through them, with their dynamic functions i.e. with the transformation of that current of cosmic or nature-energies into spiritual potentialities. The mantric symbols of primordial sounds,

represented by the letters of the alphabet are therefore not identified with or attributed to certain centres once and for ever, but they are inserted into the living flow of forces, represented as polarized currents of energy, on whose interaction, mutual penetration and combination depends the success of Spiritual training."

Also,

"The Buddhist Tantras thus replace the static, physiologically fixed definition of the *nāḍis*, by a spiritualised, dynamic, psychological one. The follower of the Buddhist Tantras does not commit himself as to whether the three main *nāḍis* are within or without the spinal column, or how far the Chakras coincide with certain organs of the body,¹ and how many 'petals' are in each of these 'lotuses', or which quality is associated with each petal and which deity controls a particular Chakra. He

1. Incidentally, the author rightly asks that these Chakras or *nāḍis* shall not be confused with anatomical parts analysable by medical science: "The channels through which these psychic energies flow in the human body, are called *nāḍis*, and follow the fundamental structure of the body in a similar way as the nerve-system, though they cannot be identified with it, as has often been wrongly maintained. While according to Western conceptions, the brain is the exclusive seat of consciousness, *yogic experience shows that our brain consciousness is only one among a number of possible forms of consciousness, and that these, according to their function and nature, can be localised or centered in various organs of the body. These 'organs' which collect, transform and distribute the forces flowing through them, are called Chakras or centres of force. From them radiate secondary streams of psychic force, comparable to the spokes of a wheel, the ribs of an umbrella, or the petals of a lotus.*"

knows that these are only aids and preliminaries, and that he is not dealing with fixed facts or data, which exist unalterably and for ever, but rather with things that depend on what we make of them, things that we create ourselves—just as we have created our own body, within the frame of certain universal and immanent laws, and according to the level of our development, our karmic preconditions."

III

Mind (*manas*) occupies a crucial position in the total consciousness of man and a great secret of this *sadhana* lies in the art of reversing the mind. The real *siddhi*, explains the writer,

"consists in inner conversion, in the 'turning-about in the deepest seat of consciousness'. It is the re-orientation, the new attitude, the turning away from the outside world of objects to the inner world of oneness, of completeness—the all-embracing universality of the mind. It is a new vista, an entering into the stream of liberation. It is the only miracle which the Buddha recognised as such and besides which all other *siddhis* are mere playthings."

The Buddhist system of meditation has a unique place for the technique of yogic breathing which is here explained as follows:

"This is the first step: the simple observation of the process of breathing, without mental interference, without compulsion, without

violation of the natural functions of the body. Hereby breathing becomes conscious, and with it the organs through which it flows.

If we were concerned here only with an intellectual observation and analysis of the breathing-process, this exercise would more or less come to an end at this stage. The purpose of this exercise, however, is exactly the contrary, namely the gaining of a synthesis: the experience of the body as a whole.

‘Experiencing the *whole body* I will inhale; experiencing the whole body, I will exhale’, thus he trains himself.

The next step is the stilling of all the functions of the body through the conscious rhythm of the breath. From this state of perfect mental and physical equilibrium and its resulting inner harmony, grows that serenity and happiness which fills the whole body with a feeling of supreme bliss, like the refreshing coolness of a spring that penetrates the entire water of a mountain lake.

‘Experiencing serenity, I will breathe in; experiencing serenity, I will breathe out’, thus he trains himself. ‘Experiencing bliss, I will breathe in; experiencing bliss, I will breathe out’, thus he trains himself.

Thus breathing becomes a vehicle of spiritual experience, mediator between body and mind. It is the first step towards the transformation

of the body from the state of a more or less passively and unconsciously functioning physical organ into a vehicle or tool of a perfectly developed and enlightened mind, as demonstrated by the radiance and perfection of the Buddha's body.

The next steps are devoted to the incorporation of spiritual functions in the process of breathing: 'Experiencing mental activities, being conscious of the mind, gladdening the mind, concentrating the mind, freeing the mind, I will inhale and exhale', thus he trains himself. In other words: whatever may be the subject of meditation, be it the body, feelings, the mind, or that which moves the mind (phenomena of ideas), it is being associated with the functions of breathing, projected into them, experienced in them, supported by them: thus becoming one with the 'breath-body'.

Equally important is the process of awakening the '*inner fire*' gTum-mo. This 'fire', it must be noted, is not the bodily heat which, it is supposed some, is intended to keep the system warm in the cold climate of the northern mountains. It is essentially of the nature of *tapas* and physical heat may be only an incidental effect of the energised inner potential.

"After the sadhaka has purified his mind through devotional exercises and has put himself in a state of inner preparedness and receptivity; after he has regulated the rhythm of his

breath, filled it with consciousness and spiritualised it through mantric words, he directs his attention upon the Navel Centre in whose lotus he visualises the seed-syllable RAM and above it the seed syllable MA, from which latter emerges Dorje Naljorama (Vajra-Yogini) a Khadoma of brilliant red colour surrounded by a halo of flames..."

Thereupon the sadhaka proceeds with further steps of identification with the revealed form and covers each Centre step by step as prescribed; then follows the process of descent and integration of the whole system — including the body — in the 'fiery ocean' :

"The fire of spiritual integration which fuses all polarities, all mutually exclusive elements arising from the separateness of individuation, this is what the Tibetan word gTum-mo means in the deepest sense and what makes it one of the most important subjects of meditation. It is the all-consuming incandescent power of that overwhelming Inner Fire which since Vedic times has pervaded the religious life of India: the power of tapas."

Another important point that the author clarifies is the difference between this Yoga and the Kundalini Yoga with which we in India are familiar. He writes :

"In the Buddhist yoga the emphasis is not on the power-aspect, the Sakti, but on the

knowledge-aspect, the *prajñā*; and for this reason Sakti Kundalini is not even mentioned in the Buddhist system—still less is she made the subject of meditation.

In the 'Yoga of the Six Doctrines of Naropa', the seat of the Kundalini is excluded from the path of visualisation, and the sadhaka is advised: 'Meditate on the four Chakras, of which each is formed like an umbrella or the wheel of a chariot. The four Chakras, however, which form the wheels of the fiery chariot of the spirit are: the Crown and Throat Centres, as the front, the Heart and Navel Centres, as the rear pairs.'

Also:

"In the Buddhist Tantra Yoga concentration is not directed upon the Kundalini or the Root Centre, but on the channels, the main power-currents whose tension (or 'gravitational' force) is regulated through a temporal damming-up and modification of the energy-content in the upper Centres.

Instead of the natural power of the Kundalini, the inspirational impulse of consciousness (*prajñā*) in the form of Khadoma and her mantric equivalents is made the leading principle, which opens the entrance into the *suṣumnā* by removing the obstructions and by directing the inflowing forces."

The author repeatedly calls attention to the fact that contrary to popular understanding (or

misunderstanding) the Buddhist Teaching does not preach flight from life, neglect of the body, in its scheme of deliverance. On the contrary, no real distinction is made between the body and the mind and the soul: all are conceived as constituting one movement and all are subjected to the charge of the yogic fire:

"The inclusion of the body in the process of spritual development which the Buddha placed into the centre of his meditative practice is not only characterised by the already mentioned spiritualisation of the breathing process (by making it a conscious function), but even more so by the fact that duality of body and soul does not exist for him, and that therefore among bodily, mental, psychic, and spritual functions there is only a difference in degree but not in essence. When the mind has become luminous, the body too must partake in this luminous nature. This is the reason for the radiation which emanates from all saints and Enlightened Ones, the aura which surrounds them and which has been described and depicted in all religions. This radiation which is visible only to the spiritual eye, is the direct effect of tapas, that flame of religious devotion and self-surrender, in which the light of knowledge and the warmth of the heart are united."¹

¹ The author describes how there is an inevitable disharmony between the body and the more conscious parts like the mind, in the process of Yoga and points out that the needed harmonisation "can only be hastened by a conscious penetration, spiritualisation and trans-

He shows how the Way of the Buddha

"was not one of running away from the world but of *overcoming* it through growing knowledge (*prajñā*), through active love (*maitrī*) towards one's fellow-being, through inner participation in the joys and sufferings of others (*karuṇā muditā*), and through equanimity (*upekṣā*) with regard to one's own weal and woe."

Summing up the problem, he writes:

"Those who think that form is unimportant, will miss the spirit as well, while those who cling to form lose the very spirit which they tried to preserve. Form and movement are the secret of life and the key to immortality. Those who see only the transitoriness of things and reject the world because of its transitory character, see only the change on the surface of things, but have not yet discovered that the form of change, the manner in which change takes place, reveals the spirit that inspires all form, the reality that informs all phenomena. With our physical eye we see only change. Only our spiritual eye is capable of seeing stability in transformation. Transformation is the *form* in which the Spirit moves: it is life itself. Whenever material form cannot follow the movement of the spirit, decay appears. Death is the protest of the spirit against the unwillingness of

formation of the body, as it has been reported of certain Siddhas and, above all, of the Buddha, whose body, is said to have been of such unearthly beauty and radiance, that even the golden robes which were offered to him, lost their lustre."

the formed to accept transformation: the protest against stagnation."

IV

A good portion of this work is devoted to a detailed exposition of the key-mantra of this yoga-discipline, OM MANI PADME HUM,—to which we shall turn at the end of this study,—how it forms the frame-work of the meditation, visualisation and projection of oneself into the universal consciousness.¹ There are explanations of Dēities that are in various forms,² some lustrous, some fearful. The well-known *Dākinis* and their place in Buddhist meditation receive adequate attention. He writes:

"In classical Sanskrit Dakinis were mainly conceived as demoniacal beings hostile to

1. Vide: "Just as Avalokitesvara descends into the world, and as each ray of his compassion is like a helping hand stretched out towards those in need of help, so each syllable of his *mantra* is filled with the power and devotion of his love. It is therefore perfectly natural that the six sacred syllables are conceived in juxtaposition to the six realms, whose sufferings they are meant to relieve by liberating the beings from their illusions and attachments. For those who open themselves to the power of the mantra i.e. for those who not only believe in its efficacy, but who fill it with the power of their own devotion, it is not sufficient to keep in mind their own salvation only, but they must likewise be moved by the desire to contribute to the possibilities of liberation of all other living beings. For this reason the *sadhaka*—after having traversed the various planes and stages of spiritual reality, contained in the mantra—turns his mind towards the different classes of beings, and while pronouncing each of the six sacred syllables, he directs his attention on one of the six realms."

2. Answering a familiar charge by the moderns against the number of deities in Eastern religions as remnants of primitive polytheism, the author states: "The growing multitude of figures of the Tantric

humans and haunting cremation grounds and similar lonely and uncanny places, where unknown dangers lurked. But just these places, which were shunned by common men, were preferred by yogis as being most suitable for solitary contemplation and religious ecstasy. They were hallowed places to them where they listened to the voice of the silence and of the liberation from wordly fears and hopes Dakinis became the genii of meditation, spiritual helpers, who inspired the sadhaka and roused him from the illusion of wordly contentment. They were the forces that awakened the dormant qualities of mind and soul.

In the sense of meditation and in the language of Yoga, however, they are not 'beings' existing outside ourselves, but spiritual impulses and realisation of all those forces and conformations, which until then were dormant and hidden in the darkness of the subconsciousness. The impetus, dwelling behind this process of increasing awareness and consciousness, grows in proportion to its progress; it urges on

pantheon was therefore not due to a progressively polytheistic tendency of a 'degenerate' Buddhism, which in an excess of religious emotion and imagination searched for ever new objects of veneration and raised the products of human speculation to the status of gods - on the contrary, it was due to the tendency of replacing religious speculation by practical experience. And just as every new discovery of science not only contributes to the wealth of data and the widening of our field of knowledge, but leads to further discoveries and to a reappraisal of former data, in the same way each new experience of meditation opens new horizons and creates new methods of practice and realisation."

irresistibly until the hidden light of knowledge reveals its secrets. This knowledge is frightening for those who are still slaves to the world of things, but liberating for those who are strong enough to face the highest truth."

All have heard of the Five Dhyani Buddhas and the Three Bodies, *kāya*, of the Buddha. What exactly do they mean? What part do they play in this Meditation and Liberation? The author's exposition is magnificent and raises the discussion to rare heights of sublimity.

The whole philosophy of this great Teaching, as we said, is embodied in the Mantra *Om maṇi padme hūm*, the mantra of Avalokitesvara (the All-Compassionate) revered as a supreme vehicle of liberation, both in the individual and the universal aspect. Explaining the implications and the method of dwelling on this Mantra, Lama Govinda writes:

"While uttering Om, we direct our mind upon the world of gods, who are enmeshed in the illusion of their own permanence and perfection; and while opening the gates of liberation by the power of this mantra, we shut for ourselves the entrance into this realm of rebirth.

In a similar way we direct our mind upon the beings of the other realms: while uttering MA upon those of *Asura*-world who, driven by envy, are engaged in a perpetual struggle against the powers of light; while uttering NI upon the

world of men, who are blinded by ego-conceit. While uttering PA, we direct our mind upon the realm of animals, moving about in spiritual darkness and dumbness; while uttering DME we direct it upon the hungry spirits of the *Preta*-world; and while uttering HUM, we send our compassionate thought to all those beings, who endure hellish tortures in the deepest abyss of existence.

Thus *Om maṇi padme hūm* embodies the happy tidings of liberation, of the love towards all living beings, and of the Way that leads to final realisation. In uttering these sacred syllables in all sincerity and in full awareness of their meaning, the radiant figure of the Great Compassionate arises in the heart of the *sadhaka*, transforms his mortal body into the *Nirmāṇakāya* of Avalokitesvara, and fills his mind with the boundless light of Amitabha.

The deep devotion with which this hopeful message was accepted and taken to heart by the people of Tibet, is demonstrated by the innumerable rock-inscriptions and votive-stones on which the sacred formula of Avalokitesvara is millionfold engraved. It is on the lips of all pilgrims, it is the last prayer of the dying and the hope of the living. It is the eternal melody of Tibet, which the faithful hears in the murmuring of brooks, in the thundering of waterfalls and in the howling of storms, just as it greets him from rocks and *maṇi*-stones,

which accompany him everywhere, on wild caravan tracks and on lofty passes. Thus he knows himself always to be in the presence of the Enlightened Ones and is conscious of the precious jewel which awaits its awakening in the lotus of his heart."

THE TIBETAN YOGA

One has always to be careful with books claiming to bring to light the occult tradition or the Tantric practices of the yogis in Tibet. Mostly they are based on second-hand information embellished with a liberal coating of fancy and fiction. But the works of Garma Chang¹ are clearly not of that dubious variety. A scholar in Chinese, he has practised the Tibetan Yoga under traditional Gurus in that land of the Lamas and whatever he writes he does with a high sense of responsibility and imparts a genuine touch which only a person with direct acquaintance with the subject could give.

Is there one Tibetan Yoga or are there many? The fundamental Principle of the Tibetan Yoga is one though it takes different lines in working it out with different natures and varying equipments.

"The divinity of Buddhahood is omnipresent, but the quickest way to realise this truth is to discover it within one's body-mind complex. By spiritual exercises and the application of Tantric techniques - such as Six Yogas - one can soon realise that his body, mind, and the objective world are all manifestations of the divine Buddhahood. Samsara is Nirvana, men are 'gods', the 'impure' passion-desires are them-

¹ Teachings of Tibetan Yoga By Garma C. C. Chang

selves expressions of the Five innate Buddhas.¹ Enlightenment of Liberation is not attained by eradicating man's passion desires but by identifying them with the transcendental Wisdom. The basic doctrine of Tibetan Tantrism can thus be called a doctrine of viewing man's body-mind complex as corresponding to, if not identical with, that of Buddha. The spirit and practice of all Tantric Yogas are also directed towards the unfoldment of this basic principle."

In this Thought the universe consists of dualities which are really inseparable unities. Each term of duality is intimately related to the other and to know one is to know the other also. An important application of this truth is in the realm of mind and *prāṇa*. Their inter relation is recognised in the Indian yogic tradition but the Tibetan adepts have carried the application of that knowledge to amazing lengths. To quote the author again :

"A certain type of mind, or mental activity, is invariably accompanied by a prana of corresponding character, whether transcendental or mundane. For instance, a particular mood, feeling, or thought is always accompanied by a prana of corresponding character and rhythm which is reflected in the phenomenon of breathing. Thus anger produces not merely an

1. The Five Innate Buddhas: Vairochana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, Amoghasiddhi. They represent the sublimation of ignorance, of hatred, of pride, of lust and of envy. (Note)

The notes provided by the thoughtful author are a most helpful feature of his writings and do great credit to his accurate scholarship.

inflamed thought-feeling, but also a harsh and accentuated 'roughness' of breathing. On the other hand, when there is calm concentration on an intellectual problem, the thought and the breathing exhibit a like calmness. When the concentration is deep, as during an effort to solve a subtle problem, unconsciously the breath is held. When one is in a mood of anger, pride, envy, shame, arrogance, love, lust, and so on, this particular 'prana' or 'air' can be felt immediately within oneself. In deep Samadhi no thought arises, so there is no perceptible breathing. At the initial moment of Enlightenment, when normal consciousness is transformed, the prana undergoes a revolutionary change. Accordingly, every mood, thought, and feeling—whether simple, subtle, or complex—is accompanied by a corresponding or reciprocal prana. In the advanced stage of Dhyana, the circulation of the blood is slowed down almost to cessation, perceptible breathing also ceases, and the yogi experiences some degree of illumination in a thought-free state of mind. Then not only will a change of consciousness occur, but also a change in the physiological functioning of the body."

And Tibetan Tantrism develops its yoga on these twin bases of mind and *prāṇa*. The path that bases itself on the purification, subtilisation and transformation of the mind is called the Mind-Yoga and path that uses the life-energy for its means is the Energy-Yoga. The first is essentially

psychological and it is sketched out by the author in his translations from works on the teaching and practice of *Mahāmudrā* in the first part. The second consists of a series of complex yoga practices grouped into two stages: (1) Arising Yoga and (2) Perfecting Yoga. These interesting techniques for the achievement of Enlightenment through the skilful manipulation of *prāṇa-śakti* are covered in the second Part containing renderings from treatises on *Six Yogas of Naropā*.

What is the teaching of Mahamudra? There is a Mind behind our mind. That Self-Mind is the great *Void* from which all emerges but which is stained by none. To become aware of that Illuminating Void and live in it is the first aim. The method is one of dispossession and relaxation in mind, life and body. As one lets things drop, ceases to cling to anything, the un-natural tension in the body-life-mind system gradually subsides into a quiescence. As this quiescence deepens by practice, the Self-Mind emerges in its vast Awareness of Void and the little surface organism is taken up into its Self-Nature, liberated.

There are three essentials in this Practice:

Equilibrium of the body by loosening it; of the mouth by slowing down the breathing; of the mind by not clinging to or relying on anything.

Relaxation which consists of loosening the mind, stripping it of all thought activity. When both the body and mind are thus loosened, one remains in a natural state.

Naturalness which lies in not making any kind of effort to take or leave ; no effort is made to check or direct the senses and the mind ; they are left just to themselves. One is spontaneous.

Thus, "the essence of equilibrium is not to cling, the essence of relaxation is not hold, the essence of naturalness is to make no effort."

There are three major experiences in the meditation of the Mahamudra :

"They are Blissfulness, Illumination, and and Non-distinction. In the experience of Blissfulness some people feel that a great rapture envelops the whole body and does not decrease even in adverse circumstances, such as in extremely cold or hot weather. Some may feel that both body and mind disappear, that they are extremely joyful—and they often burst into laughter. Some may feel full of inspiration and enthusiasm, or extremely peaceful, contented, and happy. The ecstasy may become so great and intense that they become unconscious of day and night,

In the experience of Non-distinction, some may feel that all things become empty, or may see the void nature of the world; others experience all things as devoid of self-entity, or that both body and mind are non-existent; while yet others really understand the truth of Voidness."

It is emphasised repeatedly that there shall not be too much of effort, too much of strain, for they

“hinder that spontaneity and freedom of spirit, without which it is difficult to unfold the vast and liberating Mind. One should therefore never forget to practise the ‘looseness’, ‘vastness’, and ‘spontaneity’.

The practice of the Six Yogas¹ as outlined in the second part of the book is too technical to be covered in a brief study as this. Suffice it to say that they are mostly enlarged applications of the Indian Tantric Knowledge of the human system, especially the Chakras, the dynamic role of the Kundalini moving in the Sushumna, and the method of dissolving the *tattvas* step by step until one arrives at the Ultimate. Generation of internal heat, *Dumos*,² in the navel centre and direction of the life-energy through the Central Channel, up and down, preservation and sublimation of the *bindu*, the Tig Le,³ in purification of Nadis, conquest of the life-breath, different kinds of visualisation as a process of the dissolution of the various parts of the being in their universal and transcendental

1. Heat Yoga, Illusory Body Yoga, Dream Yoga, Light Yoga, Bardo Yoga and Transformation Yoga.

2. “The word *dumo* means a ‘fierce woman who can destroy all desires and passions’: also it can be understood as meaning ‘one who can produce the illuminating-void Wisdom.’ *Dumo* is therefore the Fire of Transcendental Wisdom that burns up all ignorance and vice.”

Four varieties of *Dumo* are mentioned. Outer *Dumo* which destroys all evils and hindrances; Inner *Dumo* which cures 404 kinds of illness; Secret *Dumo* destroying all desire-passions; Transcendental *Dumo* bringing forth the Innate-Born Wisdom.

3. Anent this topic, the remarks of Mr. Wilson in the introduction are worth reproduction. Tig Le is the essence of life-energy, semen,

sources, are some of the main aspects of this six-fold yoga.

There are a good many points of practical interest for the spiritual seeker in this excellent treatise. We can only refer to just a few of them.

How does the practitioner experience his mind as he progresses?

At first a yogi feels his mind
Is tumbling like a waterfall;
In mid-course, like the Ganges
It flows on slow and gentle:
In the end, it is a great
Vast ocean, where the Lights
Of Son and Mother merge in one.

Powers that manifest themselves in the course of the practice are not to be abhorred. They are to be used "to ripen sentient beings, to serve all

the secretions of the endocrine system generally. In the context it means male semen or female 'blood'

"The retention in the body of male semen has a special meaning in Tantrism, although this idea (and practice) has an age-long history. In ancient Hindu and Chinese medicine, among other archaic medicines, it is believed that orgasm without ejaculation is not only healthful but preserves the semen and leads to long life. Modern physiology has not yet found any evidence of this kind, for orgasm without ejaculation in a normal person results simply in the semen being discharged into the bladder...Tig Le retention (is) crucial to Tibetan Tantrism because here the practice is based not on a mistaken physiology but on a mystical technique: in effect, *all* the life processes are reversed, turned topsy-turvy, taken out of the realm of nature: breathing is stopped as far as possible, thinking stopped, hearing stopped, seeing stopped, and so on—in a word, everything is transformed."

Buddhas and their lands." These powers are different according to the stabilities achieved.

"He who can fully master the Five Pranas, or hold them in their respective centres, will gain the following merits: his body will become sturdy, his skin smooth, his face radiant and robust, and he will be full of energy at all times; even a high, thick wall cannot impede him.

He who can gather and hold the red and white Tig Les in the Central Channel, will gain the following benefits: (1) He can radiate beams of light from his body, and also stand in the sunlight without casting a shadow: (2) make his body vanish; (3) work various kinds of miracles.

He who can bring the Prana-Mind and the pure Essence of the Five Elements into the Central Channel can transform stones into gold; walk upon water without sinking; enter fire without being burned; melt a snow-mountain with his Dumo-heat; travel to a far-distant cosmos in a few seconds; fly in the sky and walk through rocks and mountains."

Adverse conditions like distracting thoughts, desire-passions, apparitions and devils, grief and pity, sickness and even death shall be utilised for progress. By means of the Mahamudra meditation on them, as directed, they are either dissolved for ever leaving the field clear for the 'bright awareness' or transformed into valuable elements of

protection. Speaking of the experiences following the concentration of the Prana-Mind on the different Chakras, the author writes :

“According to the Doctrine of Tantra, the nadis of each of the Five Chakras take the various forms of the special key-syllable (bija) of each Chakra. The five-key syllables, or to be more accurate, the five different forms taken by the nadis, are symbols or ‘expression’ of five main desire-passions of man, namely lust, hatred, ignorance, pride and envy. So in the course of Duma practice, when the yogi concentrates on these Chakras, his Prana-Mind also gathers there. The concentration of Prana-Mind on these key-syllables will spontaneously stir up the desire-passions which the bijas represent. As a result, the yogi will feel all the great passions, such as lust, hatred, doubt, pride etc. arising freely and without his own volition. All kinds of distracting and distressing thoughts and sicknesses will arise, thus impeding his devotion. Because of the concentration of Prana-Mind in the Chakras, he will also have a variety of delusory visions in dreams, in meditation, or in the waking state. This is when he should pray, repent, cultivate the Bodhi-Mind, strengthen his spirit of renunciation, and observe Sunyata in order to conquer hindrances. He should also practise bodily exercises to untie the nadi-knots in the different Chakras. He should know that all these hindrances are actually

helps, and good signs of his devotion, indicating that he is definitely making progress in the Path."

In a remarkable analysis of the Bliss-states experienced during the practice, it is stated.

(1) "If the yogi feels his whole body becoming soft and smooth and experiences a sensation of delight and comfort when he touches anything this shows that he has 'tamed' many nadis in the body. This kind of bliss is therefore called a Nadi-Bliss.

(2) If a sensation of delicate pleasure is felt in a certain part of the body as when an itch is being scratched—but the sensation is only momentary and soon disappears—the yogi is said to have experienced the Prana-Bliss.

(3) If a feeling of warmth and ecstasy simultaneously arises over the entire body, or in a certain part, this is a bliss produced by increasing the red Tīg Le.

(4) If the sensation of bliss is 'lustful' like that of the sexual act—intensive and permeating the whole body—it is a bliss produced by the Dūmo-fire melting the Tīg Le.

SADHANA IN THE TANTRA

It was some time back that we had occasion to meet a young man who had just returned after calling on Swami Pratyagatmananda Saraswati. "When you come out of his room," he recalled, "you feel full of power." Later, an aged person spoke of his visit to Swamiji and remarked: "He is like a child. He smiles and smiles, luxuriating joy all round." Both the reports struck us as remarkably true and natural. For Swamiji represents a fine synthesis of the Vedanta and the Tantra. He has imbibed and voiced the fundamental spirit of the Advaita Vedanta; he has also practised the Sadhana and enlivened in his own being the dynamism of the Shakta Tantra. He has realised and holds in himself the truth of Beatitude which is the crown of the Vedantic Way of liberation as also the truth of Power, Shakti, that is unfolded in the Path of the Divine Mother.

Prof. Pramatha Natha Mukhopadhyaya—as he was known in his *pūrvāśrama*—was one of the stalwarts in the early years of the present century who spearheaded the cultural and religious renaissance of the nation. He was among the first—along with Sri Aurobindo and other eminent figures—to join the National Council of Education which was started to reorientate the general Education on lines suited to the genius and the needs of the country. He wrote at length on the Vedanta, interpreting its

profound thought in terms of modern Science and projected this ancient Knowledge on the pragmatic mind of the day. He did yeomen service by guiding and collaborating with scholars like Sir John Woodroffe and other Indian colleagues in the resuscitation of the Tantric tradition of this land, till then thoroughly discredited for a variety of reasons.

That is not all. He not merely wrote and taught, but he also *lived* what he believed. In his own life he took steps to give a practical shape to the high knowledge that was given to him and built up an inner edifice that is now happily casting its glow of Light, Power and Joy on all who come in its environs.

*Sadhana for Self-Realization*¹ is an apt tribute to his effort in the sphere of Sadhana to bring home to the world of seekers the practical bearings of the Tantra, especially the Shakta Tantra. The bulk of this volume is from the pen of Swamiji.² It is a selective compilation from his writings pertaining to Sadhana, spread over a number of decades. Though he says that the book is not new, still the long Introduction he has written to preface this selection sets a new key and opens out new vistas in the appreciation and utilisation of the Tantra, Mantra, Yantra, Kundalini—subjects that have

1. *Sadhana for Self-Realisation*. By Swami Pratyagatmananda Saraswati and Sir John Woodroffe. Pub. Ganesh & Co. Madras-17.

2. Only a small section (on Mantras) is from Sir John Woodroffe.

received more than adequate treatment in these pages.

In two brilliant essays on the Philosophy of the Tantras and Tantra as a Way of Realisation, Swamiji gives an effective go-by to many of the misconceptions of the Tantra that lurk in the popular mind.¹ And what is real *tantra*?

“The word Tantra which is sometime derived from the root *tan* to spread, means a system, a method, a discipline. It is a system of acts on

1. It is a commonly accepted belief among modern scholars that the Vedic and the Tantric traditions are different and that the Tantra may even be an alien graft on the Indian soil. Dismissing this notion, the writer observes:

“Tantric wings have not simply been added from time to time to the ancient Vedic mansion. The process has been in the nature of a remodelling of the old structure in which its ground plan has subsisted but the edifice has been permitted to wear a new aspect and expression suited to new times and conditions.”

Speaking of the popular confusion of “ill-understood ‘left-handed’ practices” with the Tantrikism, he draws attention to the fact that while “Vamachara is based on the profound knowledge of the ‘return current’ or *nivṛtti* which seeks to reverse the process of creating and maintaining the bonds of propensities and conventions in which the *Jiva* or soul has been held as a *paśu* or animal, it must be clearly perceived that this path (though in spirit and substance it must be adopted by every aspiring soul in its final effort of liberation) as laid down in the Shakta Tantra with its special and esoteric ritualism is not the only one prescribed in the Tantra. The Kularnava Tantra, for instance, lays down as many as seven paths or Acharas starting with Vedachara and ending with Kaula. Some other Tantras have added two more to the list, Aghora and Yoga...”

We do not reproduce here the very rational explanations of the *pancatattva* ritual offered by the writer for fear of exceeding the length we have set for ourselves.

the physical, vital and mental planes by which a centre of being can render itself an apparatus efficient for the purpose of encompassing the twofold end of *abhyudaya* (progress or uplift) and *niḥśreyasa* (that is, supreme good)...it is a reversible apparatus. The supreme good is the realisation of pure and perfect experience. To realise this end, the *sastra* has laid its path on a basis of practical realism and dynamism. Human endeavour, and the scenes, instruments and ends of such endeavour, are accepted as real; and a dynamic unfoldment or evolution of *Shakti* (which must not be confounded with force) is the way of fruitful endeavour. *Shakti* must be raised to the higher planes to be more effective and productive of the higher and more vital fruits.

The aim of the Tantra is to break through all veiling form and gain identity in one's consciousness with the Reality that ever vibrates in all Creation as a mighty Consciousness-Power, the *Shakti* which is in fact a Self-deployment of the Supreme, call it Brahman, call it Shiva. The *Sastra* develops certain means for the purpose and the most notable of these is the Mantra.

Explaining what is *mantra*, Sir John Woodroffe, writes with his usual lucidity :

"A Mantra is composed of letters. Letters and their combinations as syllables and words are all forms of manifested *Shabda*, that is Brahman-forms. They are each and all forms of the

Creative Stress, as uttered by the mouth, heard by the ear, and apprehended by the mind; but what are ordinarily called mantras are those particular sounds which are used in worship and practice *Sādhana* which consist of certain letters, or letters arranged in a definite sequence of sounds of which the letters are the representative signs. The relations of *varṇa*, *nāda*, *bindu*, vowel and consonant in a mantra constitute the Devata in varying forms. Certain *vibhūti* or aspects of the Devata are inherent in certain *varṇas*. The mantra of a Devata is that letter or combination of letters which reveals the Devata to the consciousness of the sadhaka who has evoked it by sadhana shakti. The form of a particular Devata therefore appears out of the particular mantra of which that Devata is the *adhiṣṭhātri devatā*."

Developing the theme, Swamiji notes :

"Mantra is basically Shakti or power which operating on any source, origin or centre of concentrated power, can so work it up that it may become available as operative energy, to the requisite degree and in the required line and sense, for the full production of a desired fruit or result, and conversely, the resulting product or function being given, can so reverse the process lines that it can remerge into and realise itself as the *nābhī* or source again."

The *Mantra-upāsana* does not consist of only repeating the given Mantra, There is a technique

which is to be received from the Guru who chooses the Mantra for the initiate after taking into consideration the nature and the need of the latter. The system of Chakras or centres of consciousness, for instance, is closely related to the stresses employed in the Japa. Swamiji gives important instructions while on the subject :

“In doing sadhana with mantra, both *vyāharaṇa* (rhythmic dynamic operation) and *anusmaraṇa* (meditating on the meaning) should consort, and the two principles *agni* and *soma* should be harmonised. In *hamsaḥ* for example, *agni* is specially emphasised in *saḥ* and *soma* in *ham*. If the functional balance be disturbed in Japa, an excess of *agni-mātrā* will be induced and the irritation factor (*rajas*), while that of the *soma*, the lassitude and the depression factor (*tamas*). Such imbalance should be rectified by equating excess and deficiency. In AUM, for example, A is Agni and M Soma. When you require fire, make your OM rise from *Maṇipūra* at the ‘navel’, the seat of fire. When you require soothing peace, shift your emphasis to the bridge of the base of the forehead, and make your M as collecting *nāda* merge slowly in the nectar *soma*. So each mantra may be used as a self-adjusting process for balancing *agni* and *soma* by appropriate yantra and tantra. In the doing of OM for instance, we have to shift from *maṇipūra* to *ājñā* and vice versa; from *udaya* (rising) *nāda* to *vilaya* (setting) *nāda*. The requisite pattern has to settle on the ground

of actual practice, *sadhana*; which, commonly, begins as *vācika* (vocal), then becomes *upāśu* (sub-vocal) and finally settles as *mānasa* (mental), when the deeper resonance effects, the reshuffling reforming effects of *vāk* in the system, become conserved and heightened to the point of *meru* (critical efficiency bringing out a new emergence)."

Thus Mantra is the sound-vehicle to enter into contact and attain union with the Deity or the Consciousness ensouled in that sound-form. There is also, in the Tantra, another vehicle another channel of contact. And that is the Yantra, the diagrammatic representation of the Deity. The form of the pattern that goes by that name is, we may say, a dynamic symbol, a transcript of the configuration of the forces that constitute the manifestation of the Deity in question. By concentrating upon it, with appropriate means, it is possible to invoke the Presence into what is its characteristic body—the *yantra*.¹ The author discusses the subject of Yantra threadbare and much that he says goes into what may be called the Metaphysics of Form.

And then we come to the subject of Kundalini.

1. "Yantra is an enquiry relating to the dynamic form, pattern and diagram of a thing, process or relation by means of which that thing process or relation can be so operated as to be productive of the result or end aimed at. As in *mantra*, in *yantra* also, we have commonly to start from *sthūla* (gross), and proceed to *sūkṣma* (subtle) and *kāraṇa* (causal). The *yantra* of utmost potency is what relates to the core or *nābhī* of things."

"Kundalini is the store or magazine of unlimited power seated at the nucleus of every form of existence... It is a Cosmic Principle. It exists everywhere, even in an atom of matter. The creative and evolving power in every object created and evolved is operative in it partly as kinetic power; but an unmeasured residuum of power is left which is 'coiled' at the centre or 'base root' of that form of being. It is a vast magazine of static power. The operative or kinetic power is but a drop in the ocean of its counterpart, coiled power. The one form *plus* the other makes the whole or *ṣūṛṇa*. It need hardly be pointed out at this stage that it is not merely physical energy that we are here speaking of. Physical, vital and mental energy are all forms of Consciousness as power. The former are restricted and determined and relative forms of what is free, unlimited and absolute...

"In our own organism it is seated principally at the Base centre called Muladhara... It is Mula Kundalini in the microcosm and Maha Kundalini in the macrocosm. Obviously, therefore, any great transformation of that centre is possible by 'rousing' and making available in the required direction that immensity of latent power. This is the general principle. It is a self-evident proposition as above stated. But there are different forms of effort or sadhana by which this magazine of latent power can be acted upon, and power

'laid up' can be lifted as by a lever. *Viśvāsa* (faith) and *prema* (love) do act as a most powerful lever. Tantra fully recognises it and uses it. It recognises *yoga* and *Jnanā* also. It recommends even music as *sura* or *nāda Brahma*."

Then follows a highly interesting correspondence between Swamiji and Sir John Woodroffe on an important point of the process of the ascent of the Kundalini. We miss here Sir John's part of the correspondence which has not been reproduced¹, for what reasons we do not know. All the same, Swamiji's replies mention the main points. The question raised by Sir John is: When there is the ascent of the Kundalini, does the Shakti move out of its station fully, or only in part? If it goes out wholly, how does the body, denuded of the sustaining power at the centre, continue to live?

Swamiji's view is that the Kundalini herself does not move out and ascend, but throws out an emanation of its own. The Muladhara is never depleted of its power. It is this ejet that goes up the *Suṣumnā* :

"The coiled power, though awakened, uncoiled and rising never really stirs from its place; only a sort of 'etherial double' or 'ejet' is unloosed and sent up through the system of centres. Now, in plain language, this etherial double or ejet means the dynamic equivalent of the

1. The entire correspondence is to be found in that classic work of Sir John Woodroffe, the *Serpent Power*.

static power concentrated at the *mūla*, or root. Whenever by *prāṇayāma* of Bijamantra, or any other suitable means, the Muladhara becomes, like an electro-magnetic machine, over-saturated (though the Kundalini Shakti at the *mūla* is infinite and exhaustless, yet the capacity of a given finite organism to contain it in a static form is limited, and therefore there may be over-saturation), a dynamic or operative equivalent of the static power is set up, possibly by a law similar to Nature's law of induction, by which the static power itself is not depleted or rendered other than static. It is not that static energy at the *mūla* wholly passes over into a dynamic form—the coiled Kundalini leaving the *mūla*, thus making it a void; that cannot be, and, were it so, all dynamic operations in the body would cease directly for want of a background. The coiled power remains coiled or static, and yet something apparently passes out of the *mūla*—viz., the dynamic equivalent."¹

1. "Something—viz., a dynamic equivalent or 'operative double'—is certainly sent forth from the Muladhara, but this basic centre or seat is not depleted or rendered void of static energy in consequence of that operation. The *mūla* (root), as the seat of static coiled power, can never be dispensed with. It is the *sine qua non* of all functions of the triple body (gross, subtle, causal). It is, so to say, the buffer or base against which any activity of the *Jiva* (embodied consciousness) must react or recoil, like a naval or any other kind of heavy gun against its base or emplacement. Thus while the dynamic or uncoiled Shakti ascends the axis, the static or coiled Shakti retains its place at the *mūla*, and remains as the very possibility of the dynamic upheaval. The ascending power is simply the dynamic counterpart of the static ground."

Another question arises: If there be no real depletion of power at the base, how comes the devitalization of limbs that is observed when the Shakti, call it Kundalini-eject, moves upwards? Here is his explanation :

“Now, in every cell there is, of course, static-dynamic polarity ; in the whole organism, also, there is such polarity or correlation. In the whole organism the static pole or correlate is coiled power at the Muladhara; and the dynamic or correlate is the operative power (the five *prāṇas*—viz, Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana and Vyana); which actually carries on the various functions of the body. Ordinarily, therefore, this dynamic power is distributed over the whole body, vitalizing not merely the larger tissues, but the microscopic cells. Now, the devitalization (as you say) of the body in Kundalini Yoga or Shat Chakra bheda is due, I venture to think, not to the depletion or privation of the static power at the Muladhara, but to the concentration or convergence of the dynamic power ordinarily diffused over the whole body, so that the dynamic equivalent which is set up against the static background or Kundalini Shakti is only the diffused fivefold *prāṇa* gathered home—withdrawn from the other tissues of the body—and concentrated in a line along the axis. Thus ordinarily the dynamic equivalent is the *prāṇa* diffused over all the tissues; in Yoga it is converged along the axis, the static

equivalent or Kundalini Shakti enduring in both cases. Thus also the polarity or correlation is maintained: in the former case between Shakti at Muladhara and the diffused prana; in the latter case between Shakti at Mula and the converged *prāna* along the axis. This will perhaps adequately explain coldness, increased inertia, insensibility etc. of the rest of the body in Kundalini Yoga of which you write. Commonly in Yoga this withdrawal and convergence of Prana is incomplete; the residual *prāṇa* together with the lives of the cells, keeps the body alive, though inert or corpse-like. In the case of complete withdrawal and focussing, the cells will die and the body disintegrate."

SHAKTIPATA

It has often struck me how the work and message of some saints and spiritual figures spread more rapidly after their passing than during their life-sojourn on the earth. One of the main reasons, obviously, is that freed from the physical limitations inescapable in embodied existence here, they—or rather their Personalities—are able to function more freely, more effectively and extensively in their subtle forms, and effectuate results on the physical plane with a greater intensity and range.

Recently, a monk had been to an out-of-the-way place in the Western Ghats and told the people there that he had been missioned by the late Swami Nityananda to open a Centre for the propagation of his message in that region. He sought the offices of a well-meaning and eminent individual of the town. The gentleman was inclined to help but wanted to be sure of the credentials of the visitor. So he went to his father inside the house—an old personage who had been an *upāsāka* (practicant of an inner discipline)—and asked him if the person was genuine. The father peered out of his aged eyes and said: 'Seems to be so; there is some huge Man standing behind this monk.'

The old gentleman had never seen Swami Nityananda nor known of his massive physique. It is interesting how the Presence of the Guru

shadowed the disciple and was concrete enough to be sensed in precise physical outline. Of late one has heard of so many instances of the powerful influence of Nityananda. All these came up to my mind the other day when someone placed in my hands the first number of *Guruvani*¹ issued from the Ashrams of the saint. It testifies to the rapid growth made by the institution and the solace derived from it by increasing numbers from far and near.

Among the many readable articles in it is one by Sri.B. P. Dalal. Sri Dalal is a skilled *raconteur* and makes his subject very living. It would appear he had been all along a 'non-believer', like most fashionable people of his age, till he had a significant experience in Europe. Let him speak :

"As I was wandering about the labyrinthine streets of Nice in southern France, quite by accident and partly to get out of the heat, I walked into a little old church. And there, round an altar covered in roses, I saw the poor of this wealthy city praying, wrapped in awe and piety. It was the altar of St. Rita in the little Church in the Rue Poissonnerie (the fish market street) in Nice. The faith of these troubled and poverty-stricken souls touched me. I went in, lit a candle like the rest, more out of propriety than anything, and enquired why this particular altar attracted so much attention. The priest gravely said, to my astonishment: 'because it has miraculous powers Monsieur. Try

1. Sri Gurudev Ashram, Ganeshpuri, Vajreswari.

it. No harm in investing a few centimes for a candle or two. Make a wish.' Both by upbringing and training if anything of a sceptical and cynical mind, I looked pityingly at this balding old man who seemed to believe in old wives' tales but I bought some candles all the same. I read the prayer which is prescribed and sold for a few centimes, and made no less than twelve requests: in fact all the little problems which were then on my mind. I left and forgot all about it. But things began to happen with a speed and precision which was disconcerting. The very next day, a long-awaited letter on which my future plans were to be made, arrived. In a week another wish came true. Within six months, ten of the twelve requests had been fulfilled—some of them by the most extraordinary means. I was shaken! Why should this Saint do this for me—I who looked upon all this as mumbo-jumbo, and superstition! I had many occasions thereafter to go to the little old Church and pray the simple prayer."

He describes how he missed seeing Nityanand and also the interesting circumstances in which he came under the influence of Swami Muktananda the present head of the Ganeshpuri Ashram which is founded to give concrete shape to the Teachings of the Saint of Vajreshwari. He narrates how he was put in the way of effortless Dhyana and then goes on to record a striking experience. Again, let him speak.

"I have come to Ganeshpuri...He asks how we are, whether we are doing our 'home-work' (sitting

in meditation at home). We complain we try, but progress is slow. He says something encouraging, then casually turning to me, says, 'Will you go into the dhyana room?' I get up and go in. This time, he looks at me keenly, as if searching into the depths of one's soul. He sits on the tiger skin on the bed while someone lights two scented sticks. I sit on a deer skin on the floor. He mutters something about not to be afraid. He leaves: the door is locked. I am alone in the dhyana room. I compose myself as usual, to meditate. But I cannot concentrate—try as I may. I let my thought go stray, as advised. I make no effort. I can hear Baba walking about in the garden, busily shouting instructions to persons working...suddenly he shouts loudly from nearby, 'Kalu, Kalu'. I hear him distinctly. The effect is immediate. I feel a current of power flowing from the bottom of the spine gradually up, spread into my abdomen, my chest and soon my whole body tingles with a strange force. What is happening to me? The force surges up in waves. Now I can't contain myself; my breathing is loud and forced. I am fully awake. I cannot sit still. I get up and walk about the narrow room. I feel an extraordinary strength. I stretch my arms, and flex my muscles. I have an insane impulse to break the wall down with my bare hands. I am Samson, ready to shake the pillars and bring the roof down over my enemies. I am breathing more and more heavily, as the mysterious force pours into my body. I have an insane impulse to thump my chest and shout. I

resist it. But in a while, I can resist no more. I thump my chest and laugh aloud. For half an hour or more, I pace up and down the narrow room thumping my chest, and then suddenly I find myself shouting in triumph: *Sivoham! Sivoham! Sivoham!* Am I going mad? I can no longer stand it. I open the door, and slip out into the garden, and go to the far side, where is a bronze of Nataraj dancing in ecstasy. I stay there for a while, until I am calmer."

Obviously it was the Kundalini that was awakened in him by the *samkalpa* of his Guru. What, it may be asked, is this Kundalini? What part does it play in spiritual life? Answers to this and allied questions are given in a remarkably lucid paper¹ (in Hindi) by Prof. Pratibha Trivedi.

The whole creation, she writes, is the manifestation of a Mahashakti, a supreme Consciousness-Force, which not only formulates and contains but equally dwells within each form. She is there in every man and has been visualised and pictured by the ancient seers of India as a thrice ($3\frac{1}{2}$ times to be exact) coiled *serpent* at the root of the spine, closing with its hood the door of the *suṣumnā* which is a subtle channel running through the spinal column up to the head. She is the Kundalini as distinguished from the Universal Shakti which is called the Mahakundalini.

The Kundalini is normally asleep in the lowest centre of one's consciousness, the *mū'ādhāra*. This

1. *Shaktiśūlā-rahasya*.

energy—divine in its essential nature and material in its exterior—is to be awakened in order that it may galvanise the whole system into an upward movement, releasing, in the process, the embodied consciousness from its involvement and subjection to Nature, Prakriti. Various processes have been recommended to this end; *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *mudrā*, *upāsana*, etc. In describing all these as an inferior, strenuous and dangerous means, the writer fails to appreciate their full significance. I shall return to the point later on. The most direct and easy way—she writes—is to obtain the Grace of the Guru and the impact of his power, *śaktipāta*. And here, in her treatment of the subject of *śaktipāta*, she is indeed superb. She explains:

With the dawn of the Grace of the Guru, yoga becomes natural to the disciple and his own latent *śakti* (spiritual dynamism) begins to manifest spontaneously. The descent or impact of the Power of the Guru is the result of devotion and service to the Guru. The Guru is pleased with the spirit of service and, in his benevolence, his Shakti begins to flow naturally into the disciple. It is a result of his love for the Lord. This is what is called Grace that is causeless. It is the Lord who is gracious in the form of the Guru. The Guru is verily the name or form of the Divine Power of Grace and by the Grace of the Guru is the Kundalini Shakti awakened in the disciple; this awakening effected by the Guru's Shakti is called the *śaktipāta*. (I may add, in passing, that this *pāta* is there wherever a spiritual awakening is effected and the spiritual

energies released into activity—not necessarily in the form of Kundalini.)

Saktipata is a spiritual process in which the Guru, moved by the Will of the Supreme in his heart, is pleased with the disciple and through the operation of his own Power initiates and awakens the disciple's self-power, *ātma-śakti*, into a movement that releases it from the bondage of *karma*. Thus does the Guru establish himself in the disciple. From one lamp of knowledge is lit another lamp. Both the Guru and the disciple become one. The disciple experiences a fulfilment in his life. By force of his faith and his love for the Guru, the development of his self-power goes on step by step. Joy and contentment in life are augmented. The very way of looking at things undergoes a change. The knots of the heart break asunder; mental questionings are cleared. An ineffable Delight is experienced and the capacity to realise it is promoted. With this awakening of self, the ego-ridden individuality is displaced and there is a revelation and recognition of the Universal Self as one's own. One ceases to be the doer, one ceases to live in the mind.

With the awakening of self-power, consequent on the impact of the Guru's Power, several processes of the purification of nerve channels start of themselves and a variety of experiences commence which strike the practisant with wonder. The mystery of Shaktipata is to be realised in experience and he who is the recipient of such a grace attains to that knowledge owing to these inner workings.

On being awakened, the Kundalini moves into activity and it ascends with the *prāṇa* through the Sushumna, breaking open the six centres on the way up. As each centre or chakra opens, the Sadhaka gets uncommon experiences; visions of the deities of the different worlds, visions of the divine beings of the perfect world; sound of the conch, bells and similar supernormal sound; a kind of intoxication, a flash of lightning in the body, seeing of lights, thirst, perspiration, tears of joy, horripilation, tremors, natural suspension of breath and so on. In some there is a welling up of poetic inspiration; in others singing and dancing follow upon the ecstasy of devotion. Each one gets different and varying experiences according to his nature, capacity and his need.

The mind gets one-pointed of itself; faith and devotion rise up; there is a kind of joy; several kinds of movements leading to the cleansing of the nerves take place. These are the first signs of Shaktipata. But the final culmination is the knowledge and constant realisation: "I am everywhere; All is indeed my own play." The knower, the known and the knowledge become one. As long as the union of Shiva and Shakti is not effected in the Sahasrara, there are seen lights, sun, moon, stars, there are heard sounds, etc. Following upon such supernormal experiences in the processes of the purification of the elements and the principles, *tattva*, of one's existence the mind experiences the state of Peace and becomes still, becomes so to say, a Void. Beyond this state of Void lies concealed

the Ananda of Para-Brahman knowable only in experience. In this void of the mind there is a slow dawning of the *ṛambharā prajñā*—Consciousness full of truth—and there is the revelation of Para-Brahman. At the end of this stage there comes the Nirvikalpa Samadhi and the whole world appears like a dream. This state is called *turyātila*, beyond the fourth. The great soul who has attained to it is called Bhagavan.

This then is Shaktipata.

In some form or other it operates in every line of spiritual effort where the Guru-shishya relation is recognised. As Shrimathi Trivedi points out, it is an integral part of the Indian spiritual tradition and there are still Gurus in this land who have the capacity and the higher sanction to effect the *pāta* in those whom they choose—or are directed to choose. He makes another point which is noteworthy. He alone is empowered to shower his grace through Shaktipata who is also capable of regulating—and, if necessary, checking—the course of the Power he releases into action. He takes into account the capacity of the disciple, the extent to which he can hold the descent, and suits his impact.

And that is natural. For this discipline revolves upon an axis of two-ends the Guru, and the disciple. In the dynamics of this yogic sadhana both have their parts to play. True, the major role is played by the Power of the Guru which initiates and works the yoga. But the disciple too has a responsibility. He has to *contain* and *support* the

Shaktipata in its continued workings. And here comes the necessity of what may be called the personal contribution. Ceaseless purification and reorientation of one's energies of the body, life and mind so as to collaborate with the Power set in operation by the Guru is indispensable. For that purpose there are various sadhanas that are recommended; meditation, concentration, progressive surrender in adoration, mantra-japa, etc. Their value should never be underestimated. Personal exertion, in some form or other, is necessary to equip and perfect the *ādhāra* in which the Guru releases his tapas-shakti. At any rate, it is indispensable till the nature and the being of the disciple are completely surrendered to the higher Will that is active and his sadhana is entirely taken charge of by the Shakti.

MAHA YOGA

The Goal in the teaching of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi is of course the same as in the Vidyas of the Upanishad viz. Self-realisation. But his way to reach it is distinctly his own. It will not be correct to say that it is the Way of Knowledge, Jnana, or the Way of Meditation, Dhyana, of the well-known Vedantic sadhanas. The yoga developed by him to arrive at the fundamental realisation of one's true Being is one of the most direct, swift means given to man so far. What is this yoga, what are its requirements and its technique? In what way is it different from other traditional lines of the Yoga of Knowledge? These and other pertinent questions are dealt with with satisfying clarity in the slender book by Sri Narayana Iyer, *The Technique of Maha Yoga*¹. This is one of those little books whose worth far outweighs their size. The contents of this treatise have a certain authenticity as the author writes from his personal experience ranging over twenty years of sadhana. He underlines the very difficulties that come up before the aspirant at different stages and provides just the needed guidance from the utterances of Bhagavan recorded in various places, from the lives of other spiritual personalities and from relevant scriptures of old. Altogether a reliable guide not only to practicants of the

1. Pub. Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai.

Maharshi's Yoga but to the seekers of all paths, for, certain truths are common to all and can be drawn upon by anybody.

In Jnana Marga, the Path of Knowledge, points out the author, there are two lines e. g. the way of meditation, *dhyāna* and the way of introspection, *vicāra*. In the former, there is a concentrated meditation on the great truths formulated in Mahavakyas like *Aham brahmāsmi*, 'I am the Self'. It consists of three steps, *śravaṇa*, hearing of the Truth from others, *manana*, understanding it in the mind, and *nididhyāsana*, contemplating over it in a prolonged manner. In the latter, there is one continuous thought-process *in the reverse*, seeking the fundamental truth behind thought itself. The Maharshi follows this line and calls it the Mahayoga in which one pursues the self-enquiry 'Who am I?' till one is led to the Self that is object of all seeking. The process begins with an attempt to analyse each thought as it comes, to find out its source, then the Source of that source: or one goes on mentally repeating 'Who am I?' and canalises the thought-activity into this central Thought. This practice, if persisted, in leads to a gradual thinning of the mind, reduction in its thought-contents and with the silencing of the activity of the mind, there emerges within Something greater, the Influence of the Self which ultimately claims the individual for Itself. This in short is the method.

Now to follow the author in his exposition.

In all lines of Jnana Yoga, there are seven stages or *bhumikās*; *subhecchā*, will for the auspicious

goal and dispassion for the lowly : *vicāraṇā*, deliberation on the scripture ; *tanumānāsi*, subtilisation of the mind freed from gross pursuits ; *sattvāpatti*, attainment of a state of purity in consciousness ; *asamsakti* : detachment ; *padārthābhāvanā*, absence of interest in objects of senses, internal or external ; *turiya*, an abiding in a state of consciousness that is above all duality, all phenomenon. Whatever the kind of Jnana-yoga, all these stages appear in some form or other.

For most a Guru, Teacher, who has already trodden the path is indispensable. For no individual effort is enough by itself to attain the goal. The help and lead of the Guru's *sādhana śakti* and the Grace of the Divine are essential. Grace, says Bhagavan, 'is the function of God'. It is a causeless flowing out of His compassion irrespective of one's deserts. It is a Power of Divine Love streaming forth on all creation. Though it acts on its own, still it makes a difference at our end whether we are receptive to it or not. And receptivity here means a consciousness in which there is a sufficient purity, expectancy and quiet to receive what is given and retain it.

This purity in consciousness, readiness to receive the Grace from on High can be promoted and helped to form in several ways. The author describes how prayer, japa, worship, study etc., help in ridding one's consciousness of the dross of *vāsanās* and the pull of desire and to acclimatise it to the vibrations of the Spirit. He also makes

an observation or two regarding habits like sleep. ¹ Sleep, he says, should be gradually reduced and cites Sri Ramakrishna's saying that there is no sleep at night for *bhogis*, *rogis* and *yogis*! While one need not go so far as that, it is enough to make it four to five hours of concentrated sleep during the earlier part of the night and get up early in the mornings when the hour is most propitious for sadhana. This sleep too can be utilised for sadhana if one develops the habit of meditating before going to bed and slides into sleep. The sleep itself gradually acquires the character of meditation, first its earlier stretch and then the latter also, till one wakes up with the same movement of meditation with which one went to sleep. So too with Japa. "Just fifteen minutes prior to sleeping in his bed if he keeps repeating *japa mantra* or any verse in praise of his *Iṣṭa Devatā* (chosen deity) and goes to sleep with it on his lips, his subconscious mind takes it up and keeps repeating it throughout sleep and he wakes up with the japa or verse on his lips."

How precisely does the *japa-sādhana* work and how does it lead to fruition? "Repetition of the

1. It is happy to see the author taking a robust and common-sense view of sex – a matter that has been given too much importance by many. He remarks: "When celibacy was mooted, Sri Bhagavan brushed it aside and said that it was one among the many aids to realisation...meaning that the craving will wear off with the practice of the Yoga." It is fruitless to fight with the sex-instinct. It is to be ignored, not taken too much notice of. With the growth in the intensity of the inner search and diversion of interest elsewhere, the sex pull palls and gradually ebbs away.

name of the chosen deity when regularly practised for an hour in the morning and in the evening for a couple of months makes the person do it unconsciously even while at work and at odd moments. Later he gets a vision of the deity of his japa. Encouraged by this, he becomes more devoted to the mantra and keeps continuously uttering it. Later he unwittingly concentrates on the repetition i. e. hearing the mental articulation with the mental ear. This makes the mind merge in the source of the utterance, the Heart."

We spoke of *vāsanās* covering the consciousness. What are the *vāsanās*? They are the impressions left in the consciousness – not the mind only, but in the life part and in the body also—by the past and present activities of one's mental energy, life-energy and material energy. Each such impression tends to fix itself and goes to form a tendency in the nature to repeat the particular activity that left the impression. Innumerable are such *vāsanās* in the individual covering up the original state of his being and it is the business of sadhana to determinedly reduce and eliminate them from the system. There are several ways of proceeding about it. The *Vivekacūdāmaṇi* states: "Contemplation of one's own Self uninterrupted by ideas of external objects is necessary and thereby the instinctive tendencies of the mind which are the causes of birth and death are put down. Until the idea of the Self naturally and without effort flows in a continuous current, contemplation should be practised. Then the *vāsanās* perish. All the Upanishads direct man

to kill vasanās by contemplation of the Self."

And where is the Self to be searched for, where is it located? All the ancient scriptures have it that is in the inner heart that the Self abides:

The inner Self as big as each one's thumb resides in the heart of everyone. (*Kuṭha Uṇ*).

The Self, smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest, is hidden in the recess of the heart of living creatures. (*Svet. Uṇ*).

The heart is like a lotus inverted. There is a bright spot, atom-like, like the end of a grain of paddy. That spot is like a flame and its crest is the seat of the self. (*Rig Veda, Puruṣa Sūkta*).

And the Maharshi himself says: "Two digits to the right of the centre of the chest is the Heart like a lotus bud. All the *nāḍīs* emanate from here. Breath, mind and the light of Consciousness originate from here."

This Heart can be reached, writes the author, in the following manner: .

"Since the breath originates from the heart, to locate the heart for the sadhana, with closed eyes watch the movement of the breath for a few seconds and observe where breath rises and sinks inside the chest. This is the Heart and should be held as the seat for meditation."

It is not enough to reach the Heart, one must know how to keep the mind concentrated there. "From the ancient days, breath-control is advocated. Sri Bhagavan says in *Upadeśa sāra* that since the source of breath and mind is the same, if

the breath is controlled, mind is automatically controlled; and during the breath restraint if the mind is fixed on the Heart, mind gradually gets defunct. So long as the mind is turned towards and fixed in the Heart, mind is non-receptive to *vāsanās* which in turn relax their efforts."

The breath-control, it must be noted, is not the same as *prāṇāyāma* which is resorted to in some lines of yoga. To take a few deep breaths, watch each breath so taken and slide within with each in-breath, is enough to still the mind, clear the atmosphere and open the way to within. The mind can then be steadily led inward, to its own source in the Heart, in the Self.

With steady discipline one arrives at a stage when the mind is actually felt to be thinned out, subtilised. One feels the speed of thoughts decreasing; if one observes closely, one can also become conscious of the interval, the gap between thoughts. This gap, should be cherished, lengthened, for as the *Tripurā Rahasyā* says, "every instant free from thoughts or musings in the wakeful state is the condition of samadhi. Samadhi is simply absence of thoughts." Once this state is attained *Upāsana* and *Dhyāna* cease. For they are "possible so long as there is the mind and they must cease with the cessation of the mind. They are mere preliminaries to final eradication of thoughts and to the stillness of mind." (*Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*).

It is when the mind is so attenuated and stilled, that it merges in the Chit effulgent in the Heart.

"Atman is realised by" *mṛta manas*, (mind that is dead) " (Talks).

There are indeed many ways of bringing about this stillness, death of the mind, one of which is the laborious process of keeping the mind empty, dispelling each thought as it comes. It is a negative way. The Maharshi prescribes the positive way, to focus on the Self, and fill the mind with the still, silent Self. Constant practice of the *ātma vicāra* leads to the laying off of the mind in the Silent Self and the consciousness passes into the state of samadhi, first the *savikalpa* and then *nirvikalpa*,¹ in which the meditating mind or being is completely lost in the larger Consciousness, the Reality. "In this state the subject and the object i. e. the meditator and the meditated fuse into a mass of consciousness. On coming out of this samadhi the meditator recalls samadhi experience and remembering

1. The author gives a brief analysis of the different kinds of samadhi experienced in this yoga. "Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi is experienced during *tanumānāsī* or the advanced stages...In Kevala N. Samadhi the mind is immersed in the Light of Consciousness for a short while and pulled back by the *vāsanās* that have not been destroyed. In this state, awareness with calmness of mind is experienced." (We would note that the meaning given to *Kevala* is peculiar to this Thought.)

"Mind holding on to the Self with effort is Savikalpa Samadhi. In other words when the mind is fixed on the object of meditation for a particular length of time unobstructed by the least ripple of thought it is Savikalpa Samadhi. Savikalpa means with differentiation of subject and object i. e. the meditator and the object of meditation. Constant practice of Savikalpa Samadhi leads to Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Mind merged in Reality and remaining unaware of the world is Nirvikalpa Samadhi."

what he has read in the scriptures to be identical with his experience he realises himself as 'I am That'. This recollection of the samadhi experience and his identification as 'I am that' is called *Pratyabhijñā Jñāna*. It is only this *Pratyabhijñā jñāna* that completely destroys ignorance i. e. duality."

Personal effort is necessary till the stage of Nirvikalpa is reached. Thereafter, as Bhagavan says, "The Beyond takes hold of you." And when the culminating experience of Realisation ensues, "You can feel yourself one with the One that exists; the whole body becomes a mere power, a force current; your life becomes a needle drawn to a huge mass of magnet and as you go deeper and deeper you become a mere centre and not even that, for you become mere consciousness. There are no thoughts and cares any longer; they are shattered at the threshold; it is an inundation; you are a mere straw; you are swallowed alive; but it is very delightful, for you become the very thing that swallows you. This is the union of *jīva* with Brahman, the loss of ego in the real Self, the destruction of ignorance, the attainment of truth." (*Sat Darśana Bhaṣya*).

SECTION TWO

PHILOSOPHY

PRECEPT & PRACTICE

THE INDIAN HERITAGE

Sponsored by the UNESCO, this anthology of Sanskrit literature¹ faithfully mirrors the noble culture of India that is enshrined in this ancient language. Compiled and translated into English by Dr. Raghavan who has a wide reputation for his work in Sanskrit studies, it has certain special features which make it unique among similar efforts in the field.

In his informative Introduction, the editor gives a rapid survey of the growth of Sanskrit language and the vast scope of its literature stretching from the Vedas to the Puranas and Tantras. Speaking of Sanskrit, he quotes the observation of Sir William Jones that it is a language 'of wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either.' He marks out three stages in the development of the language, the Vedic, the Epic and the Classic: "The Vedic Sanskrit, which was characterised by a pitch accent, was rich in both dialectical and grammatical forms; the Epic language was easier and closer to the spoken tongue; out of these, by a process of selection and standardisation, was evolved the classical idiom called *samskr̥ta*, meaning the 'refined' language." In the literature that was produced in this language over a course of at least four

1. The Indian Heritage by Dr. V. Raghavan.

thousand years (as also in what came to be written in the derived languages—the vernaculars), there is no distinction between the religious and the secular. All is infused with the breath of a spiritual Aspiration and Ideal characteristic of the Indian Soul. And this is the note struck by the motto chosen, appropriately, for the anthology :

“ Behold, It is the breath of this great Being,—this Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda, Atharvaveda, Itihasa, Purana, the secret exercises, the secret doctrines, the verses, the aphorisms, the exegetical and recommendatory texts, all these are the breath of this Being only.” (*Bṛihadraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, II.IV.10). As the Vishnu Purana puts it more simply:

“ Poetry and all literary creations, as also all music, are but aspects of the Lord in His form as sound.” (I. 22. 84)

The volume begins, naturally, with selections from the Rig Veda, the oldest extant scripture of the world.¹ There have been differences of opinion regarding the probable date of the Veda. We agree with Dr. Raghavan that these hymns can easily claim an antiquity of at least a few milleniums before Christ. Apart from internal evidence with reference to seers ancient, *pūrva*, and seers modern, *nūlana*, there is a good deal of archaeologi-

1. “They far outshine any literary remains of antiquity surviving in cuneiform or hieroglyphic, in clay tablets or papyrus, in Asia Minor or Egypt.”

cal evidence to which the editor draws attention. He writes:

"Discoveries at Boghazkoi in Asia Minor show that the Vedas were earlier than 1400 B. C; in the clay tablets discovered at that place, the Vedic gods Mitra¹, Varuna, Indra and Nasatyau are mentioned in the treaties concluded between the Hittite and Mitanni Kings. The phonetics of these names as well as the numerals mentioned in a Hittite text on chariot-racing describing horses in language very akin to Sanskrit....among the Kassites who ruled over Babylonia from 1746 to 1180 B. C. names of princes have been found which are Sanskritic."

The hymns translated here from the Rig, Yajus and Atharva Samhitas are chosen with a view to emphasise the all-inclusive character of the Veda which took the whole of life into its folds. The seers of the Veda attach a definite significance to

The Vast Earth, whom the gods, without sleep or neglect guard always,²

and to life here on Earth, each part of it being invested by them with a deeper significance as exemplified by the variety of hymns cited in these pages. They have a tender feeling for human emotions and it takes beautiful expression :

Bounteous Indra! Endow this bride with

1 "The fleet-winged sun-disc which the Veda describes as Suparna, Garutman and Tarkshya Arishtanemi was the very emblem hovering over the head of the Hittite kings."

2. Atharva XII.1

excellent sons and fortune; give her ten sons and make her husband the eleventh.¹

Next, there is an important section on the Brahmanas. It is usual in most anthologies to lightly pass over this literature as simply dry ritualism and hence of no special importance to posterity. Dr. Raghavan, we are happy to note, has made a departure. The "urge and spirit of enquiry", he writes, "which culminated in the discovery of the one ultimate Truth, the Brahman, had its beginnings in the Brahmanas; it is in the Brahmanas that one first meets with that higher and esoteric sense in which the different aspects of sacrifice and ritual were understood in the Upanishads so as to render them useful as meditative exercises (*vidyās*); in the Upanishads one finds often that things are understood on three planes, the sacrificial or the divine (*adhiyajña* or *adhidaiva*), the natural (*adhibhūta*) and the subjective (*adhyātma*); this threefold interpretation again originated in the Brahmanas and the subjective turn (*adhyātma*) that the Brahmanas thus gave was responsible for the further investigations into the nature of the inner Self (*ātman*) and the birth of philosophy which came to be called *adhyātmavidyā*. If the Upanishads regularly use the concept of 'devas' (gods) as meaning the senses, presided over by their respective deities, it was the Brahmanas which inaugurated this esoteric interpretation."

1. Rigveda X. 71. 45. The translator adds a note: "The idea is that the husband should always be attended to with love and care as if he were the youngest child."

The Brahmanas along with the Upanishads, as pointed out by Sri Aurobindo, form a powerful movement of revival of the spiritual tradition of the Veda after a long period of decline. The Brahmanas concentrate upon the formal or ceremonial character of the Vedic system—though they have their highly philosophical passages, even as the Upanishads devoted to the recovery and development of the inner, the psychological aspect of the Teaching, do have their ritualistic portions. But there is in the Brahmanas a sustained effort to expound and justify the esoteric or spiritual significance of the various rituals. And many of the obscure passages in the Upanishads become clear only in the light of this exposition of the Brahmanas.

To quote some of the significant passages:

Faith wraps the gods; Faith wraps this entire universe.¹

With eight courts around the nine gates is this unassailable city of gods (the body); in it is a golden treasury; that is the heavenly region, wrapt in light; whoever knows this city of the Brahman, wrapt in immortality, to him the Brahman, as well as Brahma the Creator, grant life...This invincible golden city, glowing like gold and wrapt in the glory, the Creator has entered.²

1. Krishna Yajurveda: Taittiriya Brahmana II. viii. 88

2. do. Taittiriya Aranyaka I. 27

It is not generally known that there are hymns to the Divine Mother in the Brahmanas too:

HYMN TO DURGA

That Goddess who is like fire and blazes forth with Her power, the creative power of the self-luminous Lord, sought by devotees for the fruits of their actions, that Goddess, difficult of access (*durgā*), I seek as my refuge; to you, O Goddess, who are the safe barque for people to cross easily, I make obeisance.¹

In the Section on the Upanishads in which selections from the eleven major texts are given, Dr. Raghavan adds interesting notes underlining the passages which have had repercussions in the Western world of letters. For instance, he points out that the episode of the Gods and the Demon in Kena (III) has been freely rendered by Victor Hugo in his poem SUPREMACY (in the *Legend of the ages*.)

Similarly, Emerson's poem BRAHMAN is a rendering of the Katha text (I. 2.19): If the slayer thinks of slaying, and the victim thinks he is slain, both know not; this (Self) neither kills nor is killed.

What the Thunder said by T. S. Eliot (in his *The Waste Land*) is based upon the Brihadaranyaka text (V. 2.3): This is what this heavenly voice, the thunder goes on saying, DA, DA DA—Be subdued. Give, Be compassionate¹.

1. Taittiriya Aranyaka X. I.

So also, the phrase *kṣurasya dhārā*, sharp razor's edge, in Katha 1. 3.14, has supplied the title to a novel of Somerset Maugham.

The Translator draws attention to the four *Mahāvākyas*, Great Affirmations of Brahman, in the Upanishads; each of the four Vedas has a Mahavakya in one of the Upanishads belonging to it. Thus:

Prajñānam Brahma, Knowledge is Brahman (Aitareya Up. III. 3),¹ is the Mahavakya of the Rigveda;

Tat tvam asi, That Thou Art (Chhandogya Up. VI. 8.7) of the Samaveda;

Aham Brahma asmi, I Am Brahman (Brihadaranyaka Up. I. 4.10) of the Yajurveda;

Ayam ātmā Brahma, This Self is Brahman (Mandukya Up. I. 2) of the Atharvaveda.

Writing on the growth and significance of the Puranas, the editor makes some instructive remarks which place certain aspects of the Indian tradition in the proper focus:

"Most of the Puranas embody material bearing on this subject of Kshetra (Holy Spot) and Tirtha (Holy Waters), and the Skanda Purana may be singled out in this connection...Some of the great Chola temples were envisaged by their authors, the teachers and the royal builders together, as concrete embodiments of spiritual truths; two examples will suffice to illustrate the inner significance of what might be thought of as a negligible

part of Hindu literature: the stories relating to Chidambaram, the shrine of Nataraja, and Tiruvarur, the shrine of Tyagaraja, both in South India. The former represents the doctrine of a dry, soulless routine of sacrificial ritual yielding to the overpowering influence of divine personality and the philosophy of the Lord engaged in his eternal dance of creation, maintenance, destruction, bondage and deliverance, on the cosmic stage; the macrocosmic dance on the vast stage of the firmament has its counterpart in the microcosm, in the heart of the individual, the smaller ether, the miniature stage, the *dabhra*, *dahra* or *dahara ākāśa* of the Taittiriya Aranyaka and the Upanishads; thus Chidambaram is Dahara Vidya in symbolic presentation. No less inspiring is the symbology of Tiruvarur and God Tyagaraja which represents a spiritual Vidya called *Ajapā* or *Hamsa Mantra*, in which the soul (*ātman*, of the individual, is seen in the eternal rhythm of life, swaying or dancing in the very process of breathing in and out, the concomitant subtle sound of '(A)ham sa' signifying the Upanishadic affirmation, 'I am That'."

Selections from the Dharma Shastras of Apastambha and Gautama, the Smritis of Manu and Yajnavalkya are followed by practically the whole of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. The major part of the volume is devoted to the Epics: there are abridged versions of both the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (the Bhagavad Gita included)- The Bhagavata Purana is also given in a condensed form with its important portions singled out. To

quote only one useful passage :

“ Uddhava asked the Lord how he should practise contemplation (*dhyāna*) and the Lord gave this detailed direction : ‘ Sit evenly erect, at ease, with palms folded on the lap, with eyes fixed on the nose ; cleanse your lungs by taking a deep breath, holding it in and then discharging it, raise in your heart the OM sounding like the tolling of a bell, and in the lotus of your heart, contemplate My form as encircled by light’ .”

The editor draws pointed attention to *Bharata Savitri*, the Gayatri of Mahabharata, which is as apposite to the conditions of today as it was during the fateful days of Vyasa ;

With uplifted hands I shout ; alas ! none listens ! From observance of righteousness (*Dharma*) other ends of human pursuit like wealth and pleasure come ; then why is this righteousness not followed ? Not for any desire, not out of any fear, not out of avarice, not even for the sake of one's life should one forsake Dharma.

The anthology closes with specimens of a large variety of *stotra*, prayer literature (including the Vishnu Sahasranama from the Mahabharata), devoted to the different formulations of the Supreme Godhead as experienced and celebrated in the history of Indian Religion.

THE SPIRITUAL HERITAGE OF INDIA

Swami Prabhavananda is a senior monk of the Sri Ramakrishna Order whose writings have always had a distinctive flavour of the Spirit that has never failed to communicate itself to the reader. His present work¹ on the spiritual Heritage of India is again of the same genre, different from most of the current books on the subject which are usually academic chronicles touching only on the externals of the long line of Indian philosophy and religion. Swami Prabhavananda gives, so to say, an inside view of the heritage and lets us feel something of the Breath of the Eternal that has ever enlivened this ancient tradition.

At the very outset, the author wisely points out one or two special features of the Indian philosophy of religion which distinguish it from the Western: "Indian philosophy is not merely metaphysical speculation, but has its foundation in immediate perception. God and soul are regarded by the Hindu mind, not as concepts, speculative and problematical, as is the case in Western philosophy, but as things directly known." Secondly, this Knowledge based upon perception is verifiable by anyone who takes to the appropriate means. Thus philosophy in India is a formulation of Knowledge

1. *The Spiritual Heritage of India.*

(of God, Soul and Nature) gained by direct experience and attainable by others under the same conditions.

Speaking on the place of psychology and ethics in Indian philosophy, the author again points out the difference: "The science of psychology, as the westerns know it, is man's attempt to explain the behaviour of his mind with reference to his body and the stimuli received through his senses. Ethics is the formulation of the science of conduct in relation to society as man faces his multifarious activities as a social being. Indian philosophy and Indian psychology are not merely allied subjects, but the latter is actually an integral part of the former. Psychology has its inception in the thinking self and not in the objects of thought. It is not merely content with observing the workings of the mind in the normal planes of consciousness, as is the case with the modern system called Behaviourism, but points out how the mind ranges beyond the conscious plane of psychic activity and how the resulting experience is even more real than experience of the objective world. It differs also from the psychoanalysis of Freud, in that though it accepts the subconscious mind, it holds that man is capable of controlling its impressions as well as those of his conscious mind, and of attaining to the superconscious state, which no school of Western psychology has taken into consideration. By teaching the normal mind methods of restraining its own vagaries, with the aim of gaining supreme mastery over itself, and of ultimately rising above

itself, Indian philosophy distinguishes its beliefs from those of all other known systems of philosophy and psychology.¹ Ethics also has a role in Indian philosophy. Though not identical with it, ethics is its very foundation. Philosophy seeks by ethics to transcend the mere life of conduct, so that ethics supplies the means for making itself superfluous. Moreover Hindu ethics not only concerns itself with outer human activity, but extends to the inner life as well. Every teaching is conditioned by the phrase 'in thought, word, and deed'...Indian philosophy is thus not a mere way of thinking but a way of life, a way of light, and a way of truth."

Beginning with the Vedic literature, Swamiji draws attention to the fact that, unlike other scriptures of the world, the Bible, Koran, etc. which are revelations received through an angel or prophet

1. Reverting to the subject later in the treatment, the author remarks :

"The fundamental difference between the psychology of India and the psychology of the West lies in the fact that Western psychology identifies consciousness with mind, being with thought, and thought with the soul, or the Self; whereas Indian psychology distinguishes mind from consciousness. The distinction is due to the fact that Western psychology recognizes only one plane of experience, and gives no consideration to what Hindus call the pure *cit*, the supreme unconditional consciousness, the Being, which they regard as the real Self, or the soul, different from the rationalising mind and realised in the superconscious or transcendental state. Pure unconditional consciousness cannot be the property of the mind, they believe, for it is the source of the mind's apparent consciousness. Mind is said by the Hindu psychologist to be the 'veiling power' of the pure consciousness, the Self, and it is associated with the Self as a necessary condition of world experience. All systems of Indian philosophy recognise a Self separate from the mind..." (p 201).

and must be accepted as such on faith—verifiable or not—, the Vedas are “*apauruṣeya*, divine in origin. In fact God created the whole universe out of the knowledge of the Vedas, *yo vedebhyaḥ akhilam jagat nirmame*...The authority of the Vedas does not depend upon anything external. They themselves are an authority, being the knowledge of God. Their truth is verifiable by any spiritual aspirant in transcendental consciousness.”

The Vedas are arranged into four divisions which, the author points out, correspond to the four *āśramas* or stages in the life of the Aryan man. The Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and the Upanishads relate respectively to the *āśramas* of *brahmacarya*, life of the student devoted to acquiring knowledge and instructions; *gārhaṣṭhya*, life of the householder requiring practice of rituals enjoined in the Brahmanas; *vānaprastha*, retirement when one overpasses the rituals and devotes oneself to symbolic meditations; and lastly, *sannyāsa*, renunciation, when all is dedicated to the Knowledge of Brahman.

The Upanishads are next introduced as ‘reports of insight’, not philosophical speculations about the ultimate Reality. As Sri Aurobindo observes, the Rishis of the Upanishads ask each other. ‘What dost thou know?’, not “what dost thou think?” The Upanishads merely record the experiences and realisations of the Rishis in their journeyings to the Brahman. Their standpoints differ, their approaches differ and their experiences too differ. They are all, nevertheless, true and all are set down

without care for abstract consistency of logic or other demands of mental reasoning.

Do the Upanishads preach what they call Pantheism in the West? "If the universe emanated from Brahman, then clearly he—or rather some portion of him—is the universe; and to that extent the idea is pantheistic. But observe that despite this emanation Brahman is, 'still the same'—in which case it is evident, whatever else may be true, that the universe and Brahman are not identical; and it is precisely the identity of the two that the West understands by pantheism."¹

While on the famous passage from the Taittiriya dealing with the five sheaths of the Self, we are disappointed to note, Swamiji translates *viññāna*

1- The author's remarks on the conception of evolution in these ancient texts and its broader truth as compared with the Western conception are interesting: "The Atman exists equally, they said, in all beings, inanimate as well as animate, rocks and stones and trees as well as birds and beasts and men. At the heart of all—whatever there is in the universe—abides the Self. Beings differ enormously, however, in the degree to which the Atman, present in all, has come to be realised...In all beings, at whatever point in the scale they may be, a spiritual process goes on. Here plainly enough, there is a theory of evolution, though a theory very different from that now current in the West. According to the Western conception only animate things evolve, and in these the development implies radical changes in the organism as a whole. Nowhere within the organism is there a permanent element standing apart from the change. According to the Upanishads, on the other hand, all creation evolves, inanimate as well as animate, and the development in which alone they are interested is interpreted not as a process of radical change but rather as a gradual uncovering or bringing to light of a quintessence originally present and incapable of modification. Here, as everywhere else, Indian philosophy holds fast to an immutable element at the very heart of the flux."

(of the term *viññāṇamaya kośa*) as intellect. Is not this intellect already included in the previous, the third, *manomaya kośa*? Mind, *manas*, includes intellect, *buddhi*: Vijnana is really *viśiṣṭam jñānam*, knowledge *in excelsis*, a principle of Knowledge higher than the mental, corresponding to what Sri Aurobindo calls the Gnosis, the Truth-Consciousness, the Supermind.

Rebutting the charge that Indian philosophy is fatalistic, the author points out the stress laid on individual will in determining one's Karma, not only in creating one's future destiny but also in modifying the past *samskāras* or impelling tendencies. He sums up: "It is on this earth that a man determines his spiritual destiny and achieves his final realisation. The other worlds are only places where what is done here is given its reward...Earth, and earth alone, then, is the scene of man's spiritual struggle. A second aspect...is the fact that ultimately all men will achieve liberation, however long, for some, may be the struggle, and however many returns...The Upanishads know no such thing as eternal damnation—and the same is true of every other Hindu scripture."

After a brief survey of the Epics and their role as mentors and custodians of the national culture and religion, comes the Bhagavad Gita. The author does not discuss who was Krishna, whether he was a historical character or a legendary figure. He states at once: "This Krishna is The Divine One, the Lord who abides within the heart of all beings. He represents a conception which is the basis of all

Indian religious thought, namely, that all existence is a manifestation of God." Regarding the character of this scriptural text, he quotes from Sri Aurobindo whom he regards 'as one who perhaps of all the modern interpreters of the Gita has best caught the spirit of the poem': "The Gita is not a weapon for dialectical warfare; it is a gate opening on the whole world of spiritual truth and experience, and the view it gives us embraces all the provinces of that supreme region. It maps out, but it does not cut up or build walls or hedges to confine our vision."

Raising his voice against exploitation of the Gita which is a spiritual guidebook first and last, for political and other secular purposes, Swamiji underlines the catholic spirit of the Karma Yoga of the Gita and observes:

Temporal life and spiritual values stand in a relation of harmony; they constitute one divine life—as the Gita tells us. Insistence on the performance of *svadharma*, or one's secular duty, in the spirit of yoga, is indeed often met with in the Gita, but this insistence ceases to have force and meaning with the growth of higher knowledge. Sri Aurobindo makes this issue abundantly clear when he says: 'An inner situation may even arise, as with the Buddha, in which all duties have to be abandoned, trampled on, flung aside in order to follow the call of the Divine within. I cannot think that the Gita would solve such an inner situation by sending Buddha back to his wife and father and the govern-

ment of the Sakya State, or would direct a Ramakrishna to become a Pundit in a vernacular school and disinterestedly teach little boys their lessons, or bind down a Vivekananda to support his family and for that to follow dispassionately law or medicine or journalism."

A short chapter is devoted to the Tantras in the section on Smritis, Puranas, etc. It is shown how the Tantras continue the tradition of the Veda and the Upanishads, both in their philosophy and sadhana, though with an enlarging application. Emphasising the need of a Guru for initiation into spiritual life of the tantric conception, the author speaks of "two kinds of *dīkṣā*, or initiation: *śāmbhāvi* (or *śākti*) and *māntri*. *Sambhavi* occurs when the disciple immediately experiences divine vision, attaining the supreme knowledge by the mere wish or touch of the guru...But this form of initiation is possible only through supreme teachers. Lesser teachers must have recourse to the other form of initiation, namely, *Mantri*. In this the Guru initiates the disciple by presenting him with a mantra, or sacred word or formula...The underlying principle (of mantra) being that words and thoughts are inseparable, and that a person may effect a complete change in his character by meditating upon a thought with the help of a word and by repeating the word. The root of initiation, declare these scriptures, is the mantra; the mantra is the body of God; and God is the root of siddhi, or attainment of knowledge and perfection."

Giving a sympathetic exposition of Jainism and Buddhism, Swamiji rejects the common notion that they are contrary to the Vedic tradition. He points out they "accept the authority of revealed knowledge and transcendental experience, though they deny the authority of the Vedas, particularly, of ritualistic portions, as a result of certain historical circumstances. They do not contradict the spirit of the Vedas but are in entire harmony with it." Was Buddha an atheist? No, read what he himself says on the point: "There is an unborn, an unoriginated, an unmade, an uncompounded; were there not, O mendicants, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the originated, the made, and the compounded." (Udana VIII:3)¹

Then follow brief but adequate accounts of the Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, viz., Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Purvo Mimamsa and

1 Some writers have compared the teachings of the Buddha with the doctrines of certain philosophers of the West. Pointing out how mistaken this is, Swamiji writes :

"Buddha's teachings have often been mistakenly identified with the philosophy of flux as expounded by Bergson and Croce. This identification is especially urged with respect to Bergson. Superficially indeed, the two appear much alike but on deeper analysis they prove to be at opposite poles. According to Bergson, the ultimate reality is an incessant flux, a creative evolution, or real duration. Buddha assumes, it is true, that the universe of experience is in constant flux; but he does not admit that this incessant flux is the ultimate reality. The universe of flux, to Buddha, is neither unreal nor real. It is, and it is not. Bergson, on the other hand, revels in the flux...To Bergson 'time' or 'duration' is real and we should accordingly strive to see things not *sub specie aeternitatis* but *sub specie durationis*. Buddha perceives the flux but rises above it, above time, space, and causation ..Buddha,

Uttara Mimamsa. The author is at his best in the chapter on the Yoga System of Patanjali. Discussing the question whether Patanjali accepts God as an integral part of the Yoga philosophy, he writes: "While Sankhya asserts that there can be no proof of the existence of God, Patanjali advances certain proofs and in his plan of salvation declares that worship of God and meditation upon him are one of the means of attaining supreme knowledge and liberation. He does admit, however, that it is not absolutely necessary to believe in God in order to experience the truth of religion, holding

like Plato, sought to find the state beyond the flux. Bhava-nirodha-nibbanam. 'To withdraw from the flux' he said, 'is to attain nirvana'

"Bergson and Croce have done great service to Western philosophy by pointing out that the ultimate reality cannot be discovered by the intellect alone, but they have egregiously failed to discover a way whereby one may rise 'above' the intellect and arrive at the very source of knowledge itself. It is true that both Bergson and Croce speak much of intuition, but this intuition of theirs is confined to the realm where 'time' is supreme and a sense of the 'many' prevails. Theirs is essentially a naturalistic interpretation of reality—that is, it issues entirely from the senses and the faculty of cognition. The Bergsonian *élan vital* is merely vital expansion within the universe of relativity and plurality and flux or change—within, that is, the bonds of maya. Frankly, the use of this word intuition by the modern philosophers of the flux—or rather abuse,—can only mean a sinking below the reason and the conscious mind into the realm of instinct which we share with the lower animals. This pseudo intuition of Bergson and Croce has of course no relation to the nirvana of Buddha, the samadhī of the yogis, and the turiya, or transcendental consciousness of the Upanishads. Nirvana is in fact the 'state in which both sensations and ideas have ceased to be', in which 'the sage is delivered from time'. It is the state of *śūnyatā* wrongly translated as 'nothingness' "

that truth will make itself felt in spite of belief or disbelief provided one follows the practice of Yoga." Nothing could be more rational.¹

Success in Yoga, says Patanjali, "comes quickly to those who are intensely energetic...Success varies according to the strength of the effort expended to attain it—mild, moderate, or intense." "Sickness, mental laziness, doubt, lack of enthusiasm, sloth, craving for sense-pleasure, false perception, despair caused by failure to concentrate and unsteadiness in concentration: these distractions are obstacles to knowledge. These distractions are accompanied by grief; despondency, trembling of the body, and

1. God Exists, and "the word which expresses him is Om. This word must be repeated with meditation upon its meaning...In the Upanishads, the word Om was held sacred by sages and seers, being regarded as a symbol of Brahman. From Vedic times until the present day it has been so understood, and it has been employed as an aid in meditation by all aspirants after God. It is accepted both as one with Brahman and as the medium, the Logos, connecting man and God. It is God, and by its aid man may realise God. The entire history of the syllable is in the revelations of the Vedas and the Upanishads, and this history in the hands of the later philosophers developed into what became known as *sphoṭarāda*, or philosophy of the Word. The similar doctrine of the Logos, later also than the Vedas and the Upanishads, we discover among Greek metaphysicians—a doctrine which influenced the writer of the Fourth Gospel." After indicating the difference between the Indian *sphoṭarāda* and the Logos of the Greek Philosophers, notably Heraclitus, Plato, Philo, the author writes: "'In the beginning was the Word,' says St. John, 'and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' The verse is almost identical with one in the Vedas: *Prajāpatiṛ vai idam agre āsīt*—in the beginning was Prajapati (Brahman); *Tasya (āg devī) ā āsīt* ..with whom was the Word; *Īṣṭv vai paramatḥ Brahma*—and the Word was verily Brahman."

irregular breathing. They can be removed by the practice of concentration upon a single truth."

"Undisturbed calmness of mind is attained by cultivating friendliness toward the happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in the virtuous, and indifference toward the wicked."

Posture, *āsana*, has its own importance in meditation and worship. Swamiji quotes from the *Vedānta Sūtras* of Vyasa in this context: "Worship is possible in a sitting posture, because this encourages meditation. The meditating person is compared to the immovable earth. There is no law of place; wherever the mind is concentrated, there worship should be performed" (IV. i. 7-9, 11).

The author's comments on the aphorism 1. 36 are worth quoting.

"Concentration may also be attained by fixing the mind upon the Inner Light, which is beyond sorrow."

"The ancient Yogis believed that there was an actual centre of spiritual consciousness, called the lotus of the heart, situated between the abdomen and the thorax, which could be revealed to the aspirant in deep meditation. They said that it had the form of a lotus and that it shone with an inner light. It was said to be *beyond sorrow*, since those who saw it were filled with an extraordinary sense of peace and joy...According to the Kaivalya Upanishad, 'The Supreme heaven shines in the lotus of the heart. Those who aspire and struggle may enter there...Retire into solitude. Seat your-

self on a clean spot in an erect posture, with the head and neck in a straight line. Control all sense organs. Bow down in devotion to your teacher. Then enter the lotus of the heart and meditate there on the presence of Brahman—the pure, the infinite, the blissful.’ And in the Mundaka Upanishad: ‘Within the lotus of the heart he dwells, where the nerves meet like the spokes of a wheel. Meditate upon him as Om, and you may easily cross the ocean of darkness. In the effulgent lotus of the heart dwells Brahman, passionless and indivisible. He is pure. He is the light of all lights. The knowers of Brahman attain him.”

One section is devoted to the different schools of Vedanta, beginning with Gaudapada, the *parama-guru* of Adi Shankara and ending with Sri Ramakrishna. The precise distinctions between the tenets of the different exponents. *viz*, Shankara, Bhaskara, Yamuna, Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Madhwa, Vallabha, Chaitanya, are underlined and the whole presentation is fair and objective. There are, however, one or two points on which we would like to make our own observations.

Discussing the doctrine of Maya, superimposition, it is stated.

“If we believe that the finite has an absolute reality of its own, and that it has emerged from the Infinite and is an actual transformation of the Infinite, or we regard the Infinite as a transcendent first cause of the phenomenal world, then we must admit that *the infinite is infinite no longer*. A God

who transforms himself into the visible universe is himself subject to transformation and change—he cannot be regarded as the absolute reality. A God who creates a world *limits himself by the very act of creation, and thus ceases to be infinite*"

No, He does not. The Infinite remains the Infinite even after any number of finites are issued out of It. The *Sruti* is unambiguous on the point: "That is Full and This is Full, out of the Full the Full is lifted up. Fullness being taken from Fullness, Fullness alone remains." Again, He creates All, He manifests All out of the Infinitude of His Being and yet exceeds it—*ato jyāyānśca pūruṣaḥ*. Has not Swamiji himself, when discussing Pantheism and the Indian view of the universe's emanation from Brahman, warned us: "But observe that despite that emanation Brahman is 'still the same'""? God's infinity is in no way affected by His own self-formulations in terms of the finite. Note also that it is only what is loosed out as the Universe that undergoes change and transformation which is really the process of manifestation—a willed working out of some of the myriad potentialities inherent in the Infinite. Indeed, the Infinite cannot be limited to its state of infinity.

After an informative chapter on Sri Chaitanya there follows an intimate narrative of Sri Ramakrishna whose teachings have moulded the life and outlook of the author. Though he has placed this chapter at the close of the book for reasons of chronology, the Spirit of the Saint and his Message

—the Fundamental Unity of all Religions—pervades the exposition from the very beginning.

We do not know why Swamiji has not touched upon the subsequent course of Indian spirituality and religion. A section to cover the notable developments during the last six decades is certainly called for.

An excellent work [on an excellent subject by an excellent mind.

SĀNKHYA

One of the most striking illustrations of the fact that almost all the fundamental truths of Nature that are being discovered by modern science today were already perceived and organised by ancient Indian thought into its unique body of knowledge is the analytical philosophy of Sankhya. Sri Aurobindo points out how the Sankhya not merely anticipates the modern sciences in their study of physical Nature but even explains what the latter have been unable to account for.

The Sankhya philosophy is traditionally ascribed to sage Kapila who seems to have first systematised all the truths of this knowledge. But no work of his has come down to us. The *Sāṅkhya-pravacana-Sūtra* attributed to him is evidently a much later composition. The earliest work on the subject considered as the authoritative text on classical Sankhya is the *Kārikās* of Ishwara Krishna who lived in the fifth century A.D. We say *classical* because the Sankhya philosophy has undergone a number of changing influences and has come to be propounded as theistic by some and as atheistic by others. The classical Sankhya, however, does not posit God in its scheme of things. We shall return to the point later on.

Sankhya is so called because it is right knowledge, *samyak-khyāti*, which is the sure means for

liberation. It gives a full analysis, a discriminating knowledge of the different principles and constituents of one's own being and helps the soul thereby to disentangle itself from the hold of nature to which it is subjected. Hence it is included among the famous Six Darshanas, Knowledge-Perceptions, which aim at securing release from bondage. Sankhya again means enumeration (from *sankhyā*, number), enumeration of the several *tattvas*, essential elements of Nature—the constituting principles and the evolutes of primal Prakriti.

This universe, says the Sankhya, is a product of Prakriti which is an original Cause, uncaused by anything else. It is the *mūla prakṛti*. It is something which holds in itself in potency, in unmanifested state, all that is being manifested out of it; it is the *avyakta* from which this *vyakta* issues. It is *pradhāna*, the main, because it is the premier cause of all subsequent causes in creation. It is not seen, only its effects are seen; from its effects it is inferred, therefore it is *anumāna*: It is not conscious, therefore it is *jaḍa*, insentient. Lastly it is dynamic, ever active in the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the myriad universes. It is mighty Power, *śakti*. All rises from and sinks into this primal Energy, the Eternal Prakriti.

This Prakriti is triple in its mode of operation. It is, so to say, constituted of three strands, Gunas, *sattva*, *rajas* and *taṃas*: *sattva* the principle of light and knowledge, goodness and happiness, *sukha*, white in colour; *rajas* of power and movement, effort and pain, *duḥkha*, red in colour; *taṃas* of

inertia and ignorance, sloth and delusion, *moha*, dark in colour.¹ Gunas are generally translated as qualities. But they are not qualities. In fact the Gunas themselves have qualities of colour, movement etc. Gunas are also the *ropes* which tie up the Purusha. They are modes of action of Prakriti. Each of these constituent Gunas has its own pull and activity and when they are in equilibrium the Prakriti is in its original state of quiescence², there is no movement, no manifestation. The moment the equilibrium is disturbed for whatever reason, there is a stir, the Gunas operate upon each other and activity ensues resulting in the production of forms and objects, the universe which partakes of this triple character of the originating Prakriti,—the One Unborn Mother, red-white-dark of hue, creating abundantly, says the seer.³

1 *prīti-aprīti-viṣādātmakāḥ prakāśa-pravṛtti-niyamārtihāḥ, anyonyūbhayāvāśraya-jananamihuna-vṛttayasca guṇāḥ, sativam loham prakāśakam iṣṭam upaśāmbhakaṁ calam carajah (Kārikās, 12-13)*

2 *guṇānāṁ sāmyāvasthā.*

3 *ajām ekāṁ lohita-śukla-kṛṣṇāṁ bahviḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānāri namāmaḥ.*

This inter-activity of the Gunas and their ceaseless transformation keeps the Creation in being. Once the object of this activity is fulfilled, the Gunas gradually return towards their original equilibrium which means a cessation of Creation. In his recent book, *Sāṅkhya-Kārikā of Iśvarakṛṣṇa—Treatise on Psycho Physics for Self-Realisation*, Sri Radhanath Phukan draws an interesting parallel between this equilibrium of the Gunas and the Thermo-Dynamic Equilibrium of modern Science which signifies the final state of the universe. This threefold activity of the Primeval Energy is compared to the Three Laws of Motion of Newton. He writes: "We know from dynamics that in the physical world activity of energy is governed

The Sankhya gives a connected account of the process by which the Creation comes to be. The first to appear is the principle of *Mahat*, the Great—the Seed of the Cosmos. Psychologically it is the *Buddhi*, intellect, the principle that ascertains and determines, *adhyavasāya*. From *Mahat* or *Buddhi* proceeds *ahaṅkāra*, the principle of individuation,¹

by three well-known laws—Newton's Three Laws of Motion. In classical Physics, they are called inertia, acceleration and reaction, and in modern Physics, mass (or energy), momentum and stress.

“The terms *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* which apply equally to the action of energy and thoughts, will perhaps be better understood if we first look into our own mind: 1. When our mind is in its normal state of rest or tranquillity, we feel pleasure or delight. This condition of the mind, along with the pleasure or the delight, has been brought about by thought-waves moving in a certain way. We call this action of thoughts *Sattva Guna*. It corresponds to ‘Inertia’ of the physical world. Inertia does not mean inertness, but it is an effort of a moving body to remain in its own state of rest or motion.

“2. When again, thoughts are in motion, i. e. when too many thoughts enter our mind, there is agitation and that is painful. We call this action *Rajas*—equivalent to Newton's ‘Acceleration’.

“3. Then, again, when dark thoughts e. g. violent anger or lust, enter into our mind, they bring about a retardation of the normal functions of the mind. In the physical world such action of energy would be called ‘Reaction’, (Newton's Third Law of Motion). Sankhya called such action *Tamas*. This gives rise to ignorance (*moha*) of all sorts.

“When applied to the material world of Physics, the functions of these three *Gunas* are as follows:

“1. *Sattva* illumines moving bodies in their true position (*prakāśa*).

“2. *Rajas* is ‘Action’ (using the word action in its scientific sense) which brings about change or destruction. It is thus active (*prayatna*).

“3. *Tamas* is ‘Retardation of Action’ (*Niyama*).

1 In the *Mahat-Tattva* all is in inchoate state, without separation of entities. Sri Phukan quotes Jeans to say: “The new quantum mechanics may perhaps give a hint. In each case space and time are

the ego-sense, which takes its stand on its selfness and appropriates what comes to itself. Threefold is the nature of this Ahankara. From its sattvic nature (also called *vaikṛta ahankāra*) proceed the *tattvas*, principles, of our subjective existence, viz. the five organs of sense-perception, *jñānendriyas*, the organs of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste; the five organs of sense-movement, *karmendriyas*, organs of speech, prehension, mobility, generation and excretion; also the *manas*, the sense-mind which has the nature of both these categories of organs, *ubhayātmakam*, and presides over all the sense-organs.¹

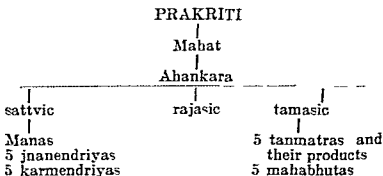
From the *tāmasa* nature (also called the *bhūtādi*) of the Ahankara proceed the elements of objective

inhabited by different individuals; but when we pass beyond space and time,—from the world of phenomenon to reality,—individuality is replaced by community." In the next stage of Ahankara "an idea of separate individual existence succeeds the collective Ego. This idea of individuality is at the root of the concepts of Space and Time. 'I am an individual' implies two concepts, namely, first, that 'I am' i. e. 'I always exist'—this leads to the concept of Time, and secondly, 'I am different from others'—which leads to the concept of space. Necessarily, the idea that 'I am different' leads to the consciousness of the existence of other purushas. Clearly, concept of Space means an idea of externality. There can be no concept of Space in the absence of an external object. But this is not a tenet of our Sastras alone. It is the conclusion of the modern Relativity Theory also. Thus, Jeans says, 'For Einstein, Space cannot exist without objects.' 'You cannot have space without things or things without space' (Whitehead). When the Jiva or the Individual Soul is in the Ahankara Tattva, the concepts of both Time and Space arise "

1. The Buddhi, the Ahankara and Manas together constitute what is called the *antaḥkaraṇa*, inner instrument, in Indian Philosophy, as distinguished from the ten senses, the *bāhṃkaraṇa*, the outer instrument.

nature—the five subtle essences, *tanmātrās*¹, of sound, touch, sight, taste and smell. It is these subtle essences that in their varied combinations² give rise to the grosser products of the elements of ether, air, fire, water and earth, the five *mahābhūtas* of which all physical Nature is constituted. The *rājasa* element (also called *aijasa*) of the Ahankara activates the other two elements to operate and bring about the said evolutes.³

Thus we have a series of tattvas evolving in succession—all originally proceeding from and forming in the spread of Prakriti. Thus:



1. *Tan-mātrā*, fraction of the Prakriti (constituted of gunas), *gunasya eva ati-sūkṣmarūpēṇa acasthānām tanmātrā-śabdena ucyate*.

2. From Shabda-tanmatra there arises the element of Akasha, ether.

From Sparsha-tanmatra combined with Shabda-tanmatra comes Vayu, air.

From Rupa-tanmatra combined with Shabda-tanmatra and Sparsha-tanmatra, arises Tejas, light or fire

From Rasa-tanmatra combined with Shabda-tanmatra, Sparsha-tanmatra, Rupa-tanmatra arises Ap, water.

From Gandha-tanmatra combined with Shabd-tanmatra Sparsha-tanmatra, Rupa-tanmatra and Rasa-tanmatra there arises Prithivi, earth.

3. Psychologically the sattvic aspect of Ahankara gives rise to the good, the rajas to the evil and the tamasic to the indifferent acts.

So there are in all 23 tattvas which along with their parent Cause, Prakriti, make 24. This enumeration of the tattvas and its terminology finds place in a good many of other Indian systems of knowledge, particularly in the Tantras, though in the latter the number is enlarged still further (to 36).

This is not all. Coexistent with the eternal Prakriti, there is, says the Sankhya, another ultimate reality, an eternal Purusha who is neither cause nor effect, *na prakṛtiḥ na viṣṭiḥ*, a self that is conscious, immutable and self-luminous, who lends the character of consciousness to the activity of the Prakriti. For Prakriti by itself is only an Energy, insentient, *jaḍa*, it has no consciousness of its own and it cannot account for the active presence of consciousness in its activities. It is the presence of the Purusha that imparts a significance and direction to the movement of Prakriti. Both are necessary, Soul and Nature, Consciousness and Energy. Note that consciousness is not an attribute or quality of the Purusha; the Purusha is consciousness itself. And it is for purposes of this conscious self that Prakriti functions. It springs into action, i.e., its constituent Gunas stir and operate upon each other and commence the cycle of phenomenon of the cosmos the moment it comes into proximity of this conscious self, Purusha.

This activity consists in the manifestation of forms and objects from its bosom, evolution, and withdrawal from manifestation, *sarga* and *pralaya*—all for the enjoyment of this Purusha. The activity

is entirely of Prakriti which is dynamic.¹ The Purusha is static; he is not the doer but only the witness, *sākṣī*, the giver of sanction, *anumanlā*, by his very presence. He does not actively participate in the movement of Prakriti though he is said to enjoy it. The truth is, says the Sankhya, the Purusha is reflected in the Buddhi which is the evolute of Prakriti nearest to him. Each time the sense-organs bring in the report of an impact from outside, an indeterminate awareness—*ālocana*, to use the Sankhyan term,—the Manas receives it and arranges the sensations suitably; the Ahankara immediately relates it to itself and passes it on to the Buddhi who ascertains and determines its value in terms of its own state and wills in sequence. All this time the Purusha looks at his own reflection in the Buddhi and identifies himself with all that goes on in Buddhi. This is the 'enjoyment' of the Purusha which binds him to Prakriti. The moment the Purusha, or rather the Purusha in Buddhi, reflects on this situation, analyses the elements of the structure in which he is held, on the bases of perception, *pratyakṣa*, inference from effect to cause, *anumāna*, and testimony of authority, *śabda* (which three form secure lines of thinking), there arises the knowledge of discrimination (*vīreka jñāna*) for him to act upon and disengage himself. To provide this knowledge that leads to liberate oneself, *puruṣārtha jñānam*, is precisely the aim of Sankhya. And, we may add, to provide the discipline to translate this knowledge into effective terms, to realise it in life, is the aim of its sister system, Yoga.

1. *prakaroti kūrjān janayati iti prakṛtiḥ.*

Once the Purusha realises his real state of aloofness, and stops his identification with Buddhi, the mirror in Prakriti, Prakriti flags and 'like the dancing girl who has done her part' she withdraws from the stage of the Purusha. For after all, though Prakriti has been acting for the enjoyment of Purusha, she works as well for his liberation. And once that is effected, Prakriti ceases to exist for *that puruṣa*. The blind man carrying the lame and the lame sitting on the shoulders of the blind, separate once the destination is reached. For *that puruṣa* only, because the Purushas are many though the Prakriti is one. Like the monads of Western philosophy and the jivas of the Jains, the Sankhya posits a plurality of Purushas. Each Purusha has to win his separate freedom from the one Prakriti. The question why the Sankhya system considers it necessary to affirm a multiplicity of Purushas and not One (like the One Prakriti) is discussed threadbare by Sri Aurobindo :

"The Sankhya was bound to evolve pluralism by its rigidly analytical observation of the principles of things. First, actually, we find that there are many conscious beings in the world and each regards the same world in his own way and has his independent experience of its subjective and objective things, his separate dealings with the same perceptive and reactive processes. If there were only one Purusha, there would not be this central independence and separateness, but all would see the world in an identical fashion and with a common subjectivity and objectivity. Because Prakriti is

one, all witness the same world ; because her principles are everywhere the same, the general principles which constitute internal and external experience are the same for all ; but the infinite difference of view and outlook and attitude, action and experience and escape from experience—a difference not of the natural operations which are the same but of the witnessing consciousness,—are utterly inexplicable except on the supposition that there is a multiplicity of witnesses, many purushas. The separative ego-sense, we may say, is a sufficient explanation. But the ego-sense is a common principle of Nature and need not vary; for by itself it simply induces the Purusha to identify himself with Prakriti, and if there is only one Purusha, all beings would be one, joined and alike in their egoistic consciousness ; however different in detail might be the mere forms and combinations of their natural parts there would be no difference of soul-outlook and soul-experience. The variations of Nature ought not to make all this central difference, this multiplicity of outlook and from beginning to end this separateness of experience in one Witness, one Purusha. Therefore the pluralism of souls is a logical necessity to a pure Sankhya system divorced from the Vedantic elements of the ancient knowledge which first gave it birth."¹

We might ask and with reason : if Prakriti starts working as soon as it comes within the proximity of the Purusha, who brings about that proximity in the first instance? For according

1. *Essays on the Gita*, pp. 67-68. (Am Ed.)

to Sankhya there are only two uncaused original entities, Prakriti that is unintelligent and Purusha that is indifferent. There is no Third. There is no Supreme God who elects to bring them close together or to dissolve their association. At any rate not in the classical Sankhya. It is true that there is a theistic element in the Sankhya as found in some of the Upanishads, notably the Shvetashvatara. It is also true that later commentators like Vacaspati and Vijñānabhikṣu have given that colouring to the Sankhya. But the *Kārikas* of Ishwara Krishna make no mention of God at all.

To conclude our study with a luminous appraisal of the System by Sri Aurobindo :

"Sankhya is the analysis, the enumeration, the separative and discriminative setting forth of the principles of our being of which the ordinary mind sees only the combinations and results of combination. It did not seek at all to synthetise. Its original standpoint is in fact dualistic, not with the very relative dualism of the Vedantic schools which call themselves by that name, Dvaita, but in a very absolute and trenchant fashion. For it explains existence not by one, but by two original principles whose inter-relation is the cause of the universe,—Purusha, the inactive, Prakriti, the active. Purusha is the Soul, not in the ordinary or popular sense of the word, but of pure conscious Being immobile, immutable and self-luminous. Prakriti is Energy and its process...Prakriti is mechanical...

"...Prakriti is constituted of three gunas or essential modes of energy; sattva, the seed of

intelligence, conserves the workings of energy; rajas, the seed of force and action, creates the workings of energy; tamas, the seed of inertia and non-intelligence, the denial of sattwa and rajas, dissolves what they create and conserve. When these three powers of energy of Prakriti are in a state of equilibrium, all is in rest. But when the equilibrium is disturbed, then the three gunas fall into a state of inequality in which they strive with and act upon each other and the whole inextricable business of ceaseless creation, conservation and dissolution begins...

“Whence then come this conscious intelligence and conscious will which we perceive to be so large a part of our being and which we commonly and instinctively refer not to the Prakriti, but to the Purusha? According to the Sankhya this intelligence and will are entirely a part of the mechanical energy of Nature and are not properties of the soul; they are the principle of Buddhi, one of twenty-four *tattvas*, the twenty-four cosmic principles. Prakriti in the evolution of the world bases herself with her *three gunas in her as the original substance of things*, unmanifest, inconscient, out of which are evolved successively the five elemental conditions of Energy or Matter—for Matter and Force are the same in Sankhya philosophy. These are called by the names of the five concrete elements of ancient thought, ether, air, fire, water and earth...Again, each of these five is the base of one of five subtle properties of Energy or Matter, sound, touch, form, taste and smell, which constitute the way in which the mind-sense perceives objects...

“Thirteen other principles constitute the subjective aspect of the cosmic Energy, Buddhi or Mahat, Ahankara, Manas and its ten sense-functions, five of knowledge, five of action. Manas, mind, is the original sense which perceives all objects and reacts upon them... Buddhi, the discriminating principle, is at once intelligence and will; it is that power in Nature which discriminates and co-ordinates. Ahankara, the ego-sense, is the subjective principle in Buddhi by which the Purusha is induced to identify himself with Prakriti and her activities. But these subjective principles are themselves as mechanical, as much part of the inconscient energy as those which constitute her objective operations. If we find it difficult to realise how intelligence and will can be properties of the mechanical Inconscient and themselves mechanical (*jaḍa*) we have only to remember that modern Science itself has been driven to the same conclusion. Even in the mechanical action of the atom there is a power which can only be called an inconscient will and in all the works of Nature that pervading will does inconsciently the works of intelligence. What we call mental intelligence is precisely the same thing in its essence as that which discriminates and coordinates subconsciously in all the activities of the material universe, and conscious Mind itself, Science has tried to demonstrate, is only a result and transcript of the mechanical action of the inconscient. But Sankhya explains what modern Science leaves in obscurity, the process by which the mechanical and inconscient takes on the appearance of consciousness. It is because of the reflection of the

Prakriti in Purusha; the light of consciousness of the Soul is attributed to the workings of the mechanical energy and it is thus that the Purusha, observing Nature as the witness and forgetting himself, is deluded with the idea generated in her that it is he who thinks, feels, wills, acts, while all the time the operation of thinking, feeling, willing, acting is conducted really by her and her three modes and not by himself at all. To get rid of this delusion is the first step towards the liberation of the soul from Nature and her works. \

“There are certainly plenty of things in our existence which the Sankhya does not explain at all or does not explain satisfactorily, but if all we need is a rational explanation of the cosmic processes in their principles as a basis for the great object common to the ancient philosophies, the liberation of the soul from the obsession of cosmic Nature, then the Sankhya explanation of the world and the Sankhya way of liberation seem as good and as effective as any other.”¹

1. *Essays on the Gita*,

SHVETASHVATARA UPANISHAD

Though not included among the traditional ten great Upanishads, the *Śvetāśvatara* enjoys a unique position of its own. It is the one Upanishad outside the Ten that comes to be cited as Shruti in the *Vedānta Sūtras* of Badarayana (1.4.11) and Acharya Shankara quotes from it again and again in the course of his commentary on the Sūtras.¹ Belonging to the Krishna Yajurveda—being one of its 32 Upanishads—this text contains 113 verses in all, divided into six chapters. Writing about the special features of this Upanishad,² in his satisfying Introduction to this first edition in Kannada,* Swami Adidevananda points out that this is the first Upanishad in which the Supreme Divinity is called Hara (I. 10), Rudra (III 2,4; IV,12,21,22), Shiva (III. 11; IV.4).

1. References to this Upanishad are found in the *Srībhāṣya* of Ramanuja as well. It is drawn upon by the exponents of other systems of Vedānta also. Sri Aurobindo cites from this Upanishad a number of lines in his writings. A selection from his renderings is given at the end of this study for their sheer poetic beauty apart from their insight.

2. It derives its title from the name of the sage Shvetashvatara who is recorded (VI 21) to have expounded it to an elect assembly of seekers. The name *śvetaśva*, may be explained as *śveta aśva*, the white horse which signifies, in ancient thought, pure life-energy. He who has a superbly purified life-force is Shvetashvatara. Swami Adidevananda cites the parallel of Rishi *śyāvaśva* in the Rig Veda.

*Shvetashvatara Upanishad Tr. By Swami Adidevananda.

But on that account, he adds, it cannot be classed as a Shaivite text. For there are other appellations to follow: Bhagavan (III. 11), Agni, Aditya, Vayu etc. (IV. 2). Secondly there is an emphasis on Bhakti. The closing verse speaks of *parā bhakti*. So too the terms occurring elsewhere in the text, *śaraṇam*, *prapadye*, underline the way of Devotion. Third, the Supreme is conceived and adored in Form: He is the Deva, Creator, Architect, the Lord and Overseer of all activity. Thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed is He the Purusha, shining as the Supreme Person of sun-bright hue beyond the Darkness of Ignorance. This Upanishad contains references to systems like the Sankhya, Yoga, concepts like Prakriti which have come to play such an important part in the subsequent philosophical development of the Indian mind. Pervading the work is a broad spirit of synthesis taking up the essence of the various lines of thought and practice, Jnana, Yoga, Bhakti etc. And finally, this Upanishad is remarkable as much for its profundity of content as for its beauty of expression, striking imagery and studied abandon of the tethers of mental reason. Some of the oft-quoted verses in the Upanishadic literature are from the *Śvetāśvatara*. It rings with splendid echoes of the Call of the earliest seers of the Veda and its haunting verses embody some of the most daring flights of the human spirit. Swamiji draws pointed attention to these notable features in the course of his helpful annotations.

The Upanishad opens with the question of questions: Whence are we born? By what do we

live? On what are we based? What is the Cause? Could it be Time or Nature or Law, or Chance or the Five elements? No; for they all exist for the being, a living self. Neither is this being free. What then?

The answer, says the Upanishad, has been discovered by the Rishis of old, not by reasoning, but by following the way of Meditative Yoga. Absorbed in this Yoga they perceived a Self-Power, the Shakti of the Lord, concealed by its own workings. It is He the one Lord with his innate Shakti that determines all this creation which is pictured as a Great Wheel or an ever-flowing Stream of waters. In this Wheel of Brahman is involved and revolves the Swan of the individual soul thinking itself to be different, and different the Lord who actuates it from above. When graced by the Lord it realises the truth and attains to immortality, And the Truth of Brahman is this that Brahman exceeds the universe of His making. Immutable, He contains in Himself all the three: the soul that is the enjoyer, the world that is the enjoyed and the Lord that is the actuator—all of which are really three poises of the One. Once the Jiva realises this truth it regains its original nature and becomes one with the Lord. And the means to realise this truth of oneself and the world, is to meditate upon the Brahman. By constant meditation upon Him, by union with Him, by identity with Him, there is finally a cessation from all illusion. When the Lord is known all fetters fall off; with the ebbing of miseries, cease birth and

death. By meditation on Him, one arrives, at the death of the body, to the third stage—universal lordship; being absolute, his desire is satisfied. And this Brahman, the eternal that abides in one's self is what is truly to be known—*known* by askesis, by the strenuous churning of meditation, *dhyāna-nirmathana-abhyāsāt*.

But before launching upon the course of Meditative Yoga, the seeker is enjoined to invoke the grace and help of *Savitṛ*, the Great Impeller towards the heights of Knowledge, the belts supernal Light. *Savitṛā prasavena juṣeta brahma*, with the benediction of Savitri the impeller wait upon Brahman.¹

With meticulous eye for detail, the Upanishad then describes the where and the how of the Yoga.

In a place that is level, pure, free from pebbles, fire and gravel, undisturbed by the noise of water and other propinquities, pleasant to the mind, not offensive to the eye, in a hidden retreat protected from high wind, practise Yoga.

Holding the body steady, with the head, chest and neck erect, turn the senses by the mind into the heart, control the *prāṇas* and when they are quieted, well-regulated in movements, breathe out slowly through the nostrils; restrain, undistracted, the mind like a chariot yoked to vicious horses.

Then will slowly begin to appear the first milestones on the journey leading to Brahman:

1. The Upanishad quotes five mantras for the purpose from the Taittiriya Samhita (IV. 1. 1. 1-5)

snow-flakes, smoke, sun, wind, fire, fire-flies, lightning, crystal, moon—these will be seen again and again. Not merely visions, but also there follow concrete results in the body. Lightness, healthiness, steadiness (or absence of desire), clearness of complexion and pleasantness of voice, sweet odour and scanty excretion; these are the first precursors of the perfection in Yoga. For perfection of body is a definitive result of Yoga rightly pursued. When the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether manifest in their characteristic power, then is the body forged in the Fire of Yoga;¹

1. In an important note Swamiji explains: The mind (*chitta*) that is impure and full of envy etc., cannot concentrate. To enable it to do so the Yoga-shastra lays down 6 means known as *parikarma*. The first is *citta-prasādana*: friendliness to the happy, compassion for the distressed, delight in the fortunate etc. When the mind dwells on any high purpose there ensues a happy calm, *viśayavati tū pravṛtish ulbannā manasaḥ sthithiribandhīni* (Y Sutra 1,35). This is the second *parikarma*. Example: If one concentrates on the tip of the nose or tip of the tongue, one will experience an unearthly fragrance or unearthly taste. By a mental activity that is free from sorrow and luminous, the mind is at peace, *viśokā tū jyotiṣmatī* (1 36). This is the third *parikarma* which is of two kinds: 1) by meditating on the lotus in the heart the sattvic-dominated buddhi is obtained. By this grace of meditation the consciousness gets illumined in the manner of the sun, moon, planet and jewel. 2) As the *chitta* founds itself in the *asmīā* (I am) it shapes into the form of *asmīā* that is Peace and infinity. The *chitta* of the Great thus becoming the object of meditation is the fourth *parikarma*. The *chitta* of the yogin supporting itself on dream-knowledge and sleep-knowledge, assuming their form and attaining their status is the fifth *parikarma*. To meditate on the Deity of one's choice and obtain thereby a definite status is the sixth *parikarma*. Till we get the supernormal experience ourselves, the teachings of the Masters of science will always remain indirect. And the realisation of supernormal things creates faith (in the secker) in what is subtle.

to such a one there is neither disease, nor aging nor death.

He is pure. He beholds Him, by knowing Whom one is freed from all fetters.

The Brahman is indeed One but He has many statuses, many poises of staticity and movement, many periods, *Kāla*, of manifestation and withdrawal from manifestation. As the ruler, protector and destroyer He is lauded as Rudra. He is not only the creator but also the Cosmic Person who has spread himself in the big and small, high and low, in ways appropriate to each, *yathā nikāyam*. Not only spread around, he stations himself as the inner self, of the measure of a thumb, *āṅguṣṭhamātra*, in the nine-gated city that is the body of man. Immanent in all He yet transcends the All.

The Upanishad devotes some of its most beautiful passages for the celebration of the Glory of this Lord of all, whose Shakti, Consciousness-Force, emanates this variegated creation, fashions the Myriad Many out of the Immutable One. Know this power of Maya to be His very Nature and Him the Lord to be the Master of Maya. This exalted Power of His is known to be various and innate, active in Knowledge and Strength. He is there extended not only in the whole width and length of the universe but also seated in the cavern of heart, *śadā janānām hṛdaye sanniviṣṭaḥ*. Him proceed to realise. More minute than the minute, vaster than the vast, is the Self set in the heart of creatures. By the Grace of the Creator does one

behold Him, without Desire, the Lord majestic and becomes freed of grief.

Commenting on the world *kapila* in V.21 Swami Adidevananda points out that many have taken this passage to refer to Kapila the traditional founder of the Sankhya system: But, he writes, it is not so. "It has been stated in III. 4 that Rudra the all-knower gave birth to Hiranyagarbha. In IV. 12 it is mentioned that Rudra saw the birth of Hiranyagarbha. Further in VI. 18 it is stated that the Parameshwara created Brahma. And here in V. 2 it is declared that He saw the seer Kapila at birth. Kapila is really the one of tawny hue, gold-like, the Hiranya Garbha. *Kapilam kanaka-kapilavarṇam hiranyagarbham*. And who possibly could be this all-knowing Kapila? He it is who has been called in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the *svayambhu*, *prajā-pati*, *brahmā*, the *hiranyagarbha*." It is clear that this Upanishad is not specially related to the Sankhya. It may refer to it as it mentions other systems like the Yoga and the Vedanta. Its oneness of souls in the Brahman is opposed to the Sankhyan plurality of souls. So too the Sankhya looks upon Prakriti as independent of Purusha whereas in this Upanishad Prakriti or Shakti is a power of the Lord who rules over it.

SELECTIONS FROM THE SHVETASHVATARA

(from Sri Aurobindo's renderings)

They beheld the self-force of the Divine Being deep hidden by its own conscious modes of working. (I.3)

1. *Rṣiḥ prasīdam kapilam yastamagva jñānairbhīharti jāya-mānam ca paśyati* .

The Master of Maya creates this world by his Maya and within it is confined another : one should know his Maya as Nature and the Master of Maya as the great Lord of all. (IV. 9, 10)

It is the might of the Godhead in the world that turns the wheel of Brahman. Him one must know, the supreme Lord of all lords, the supreme Godhead above all godheads...Supreme too is his Shakti and manifold the natural working of her knowledge and her force. One Godhead, occult in all beings, the inner Self of all beings, the all-pervading, absolute without qualities, the overseer of all actions, the witness, conscious knower and absolute...the One in control over the many who are passive to Nature. fashions one seed in many ways. (VI, 1, 7, 8, 11, 12)

The Godhead moves in this Field modifying each web of things separately in many ways—One, he presides over all wombs and natures ; himself the womb of all, he is that which brings to ripeness the nature of the being and he gives to all who have to be matured their result of development and appoints all qualities to their workings. (V. 3-5)

This whole world is filled with beings who are His members. (IV. 10)

Two are there, hidden in the secrecy of the Infinite, the Knowledge and the Ignorance ; but perishable is the Ignorance, immortal is the Knowledge ; auother than they is He who rules over both the Knowledge and the Ignorance. (V. 1)

The Soul of man, a traveller, wanders in this cycle of Brahman, huge, a totality of lives, a totality of states, thinking itself different from the Impeller of the journey. Accepted by Him, it attains its goal of Immortality. (1. 6)

The soul seated on the same tree of Nature is absorbed and deluded and has sorrow because it is not the Lord, but when it sees and is in union with that other self and greatness of it which is the Lord, then sorrow passes away from it. (IV. 7)

The Purusha is all this that is, what has been and what is yet to be; He is the master of Immortality and He is whatever grows by food. (III. 15)

Two unborn, the Knower and one who knows not, the Lord and one who has not mastery: one Unborn and in her are the object of enjoyment and the enjoyer. (1. 9)

There is a birth and growth of the self. According to his actions the embodied being assumes forms successively in many places; many forms gross and subtle he assumes by force of his own qualities of nature. (V. 11 12)

Equipped with qualities, a doer of works and creator of their consequences, he reaps the result of his actions; he is the ruler of the life and he moves in his journey according to his own acts; he has idea and ego and is to be known by the qualities of his intelligence and his quality of self. Smaller than the hundredth part of the tip of a hair, the

soul of the living being is capable of infinity. Male is he not nor female nor neuter, but is joined to whatever body he takes as his own. (V. 7-10)

Thou art man and woman, boy and girl; old and worn thou walkest bent over a staff; thou art the blue bird and the green and the scarlet-eyed... (IV. 3-4)

TEN UPANISHADS

*Ten Upaniṣads** is a handy collection of ten of the lesser known, but non-the-less significant, Upanishads which bear upon one of the main aspects of the spiritual tradition of India. The texts comprising this volume, with fluent commentaries by Swami Sivananda, are Yogasara Upanishad, the Vedantasara, the Sivajnanamrita, the Advaitamrita, the Svaroopabodha, the Brahmarahasya, the Brahmanubhava, the Vicharabindu, the Jyotirbindu and the Anandabindu Upanishads. As the titles would indicate, these Upanishads dwell upon one facet of the Vedantic Knowledge and experience—the Truth of the Advaita, the Reality of the One Brahman and That alone. Brahman is real and all else is unreal, illusory. Man is enjoined to grasp this truth and take steps to realise it in his life-time so that he may once for all come out of this round of birth and death in Maya, Illusion, and attain oneness with the One and Only Truth of Brahman who is the absolute Being, Knowledge and Ananda.¹

Immersed in the reign of Ignorance, Avidya, how is it possible for man to seek a way out? Con-

*By Swami Sivananda.

1. *Prapañcayam mithyā, sa kevalam prātibhāsikāḥ. jīvaḥ sacci-dānanda-brahmano'bhinnah.* (Vedantasara Up. 1)

knowledge and the known. This is the penultimate stage which eventually leads the practitioner to the *asamprajñāta samādhi*, in which there is neither the knower nor the known: the consciousness of the knower is lost in the essential Truth underlying the object of contemplation, *i.e.*, Brahman which alone remains.¹

The path, however, is not easy. The *Brahma-rahasya Upanishad* speaks of the obstructions in the way of Meditation as follows: want of right enquiry, impatience, lethargy, seeking for comfort, indulgence in sensual, impure and allied thoughts.² Also spoken of are *laya*, sleep, *vikṣepa*, restlessness of mind and *kāṣāya*, latent impressions.³ These are to be got over by various means, such as corrective thoughts, exercise of will, Japa etc. For Japa the *Sivajnana Upanishad* holds up the Pranava, OM, as the mantra *par excellence*. For OM is the immediate symbol of the Brahman who is the Goal of all sadhana. Its repetition is charged with power.⁴ It is to be repeated, the text adds, with a felt and full awareness of its meaning, *sānubhavam sārthānu-*

1. *Sādhana-catusṭaya-sampannasya tīrṇuddha-hṛdayasya samādhau tat pratyakṣam bhavati.* (Anandabindu Up. 4)

2. *Brahmarahasya Up.* 18

3. *Vedantasara Up.* 7. The *Advaitamrita Up.* (12) refers to five minor obstacles to meditation: forgetfulness of one's own true nature, postponement of practice to a later hour, envelopment by darkness, perspiration and gathering of saliva in the mouth, discontent on the failure of effort to bring in quick results, distraction by varied lights during meditation.

4. *Om ityēva prāṇato brahmaṇoh pratīkaḥ, tīryavaccaitasya uccareṇam* (6)

sandhānam. Its action in the dissolution of the obstacles and the gradual convergence of the mental *vṛttis* is lauded in high terms.

The stages of Ignorance to be crossed are described as seven: *bindu-jāgrat*, the causal pre-waking condition, *jāgrat*, waking state in which there is the first rise of the "I" and "This" feeling, *mahā-jāgrat*, the state in which the egoity of "I" takes a definite formulation, *jāgrat-svapna*, the state of waking in which the consciousness passes into dreaming (day-dream), *svapna*, state of actual dream, *svapna-jāgrat*, the waking condition in which past things are recalled and pass before the mind as a sort of dream, and finally *susūpti*, the condition of dense sleep.

Of knowledge, Jnana, too there are seven stages that are spoken of: *śubheccha*, happy aspiration, *vicāranā*, enquiry, *tanumānasī*, subtilised state of the mind, *sattvāpatti*, attainment of purity, *asamsakti*, non-attachment, *padarthābhāvanā*, realisation of the ultimate nullity of things, and *turiya*, super-consciousness, the state in which there is a natural realisation of one's identity with the Source of All.¹

For such a one who has realised the truth of the Self there is no need of meditation or samadhi.² He is the liberated while yet living, the *jivan-mukta*, who feels his fullness everywhere,³ who is

1. We come across the same gradations in the philosophy of the Yoga Vasistha.

2. *Sākṣātkriātmano dhyāna-sāmadhi na bhavataḥ* (Advaitamṛta Up. 10)

3. *Pūrṇam ātmanānam vetti*. (Brahmarahasya Up. 10.)

fined in a physical body with pressing limitations all round, how is he to reach That which is vaster than the vastest, higher than the highest? Is there a point of contact anywhere to start with? Yes, says the Upanishad: seated in the heart of every living being, there is the true Self *ātma prajīvam hṛdayakośe nivīṣṭaḥ*.¹ One must get aware of the presence of the Atman within oneself and learn to realise one's identity with it, for the Atman within oneself is none other than the Brahman which is the sole Reality. Normally, man is not aware of It. For his faculties are turned outward; the Self is to be sought by turning the energies inward. *antarmukhyā vṛttī*.² And in man the mind is the leading faculty whose direction the others follow. In a way the whole world of objects and experience exists for me only in so far as it is perceived by my mind. As the text says: perception arises only when the mind is connected with the object through the doors of the external senses.³ As soon as an object is so grasped, the *citta*, the basic mental stuff takes the form of that object, *vṛtti*, and there is the perception. But if the mind is occupied elsewhere, even if the object impinges upon the senses there is no direct perception. In short, it is the activity of the mind that makes one part of the world, *mana eva bandhamokṣayoḥ hetuḥ*.⁴ It is interesting to note the importance attached, in this ancient psychology, to the mind and its movement in the form of

1. Brahmarahasya Up. 4.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Jyotirbindu Up. 6.

4. Yogasara Up. 8.

Thought. To these seers, Thought has a form, an individuality, *cilir mūrtimālī*; it is a dynamic Force, *apratihata śaktiḥ*,¹ To seize this main faculty of man at its roots and so orientate it as gradually to dissociate his consciousness from the external universe and train that consciousness to feel and discover its innate identity with the Self that is Brahman, is the aim of the discipline, yoga, that is enunciated from different angles in these pages.

The seeker equips himself with the fourfold means of sadhana, the *sādhana catuṣṭāyam*, viz *viveka*, discrimination between the real and the apparent, *vairāgya*, dispassion, *śad sampat*, the sixfold virtues (*śama*, tranquility, *dama*, restraint, *uparati*, renunciation, *titikṣā*, endurance, *śraddhā*, faith, *samādhāna*, single-mindedness) and *mumukṣatva*, intense aspiration for liberation. He must repeatedly practise and learn to withdraw his senses and the mind from their customary objects of preoccupation, *pratyāhāra*, and accustom the mind to dwell on any one object that is conducive to the cultivation of the required spiritual climate and inner purification, *dhāraṇā*. After the mind is sufficiently trained in the process of *dhāraṇā*, it is kept confined to the object of contemplation for a continuous length of time during which the object with its content flows as it were into the mind like the flow of oil, *tailādhāra-vat*,² until the mind becomes identified with it and enters into what is called the *samprajñāta samādhi* in which nothing exists except the knower, the

1. *Ibid*, 6.

2. *Ibid*, 12.

knowledge and the known. This is the penultimate stage which eventually leads the practitioner to the *asamprajñāta samādhi*, in which there is neither the knower nor the known: the consciousness of the knower is lost in the essential Truth underlying the object of contemplation, *i.e.*, Brahman which alone remains.¹

The path, however, is not easy. The *Brahmarahasya Upanishad* speaks of the obstructions in the way of Meditation as follows: want of right enquiry, impatience, lethargy, seeking for comfort, indulgence in sensual, impure and allied thoughts.² Also spoken of are *laya*, sleep, *vikṣepa*, restlessness of mind and *kūṣṭhāya*, latent impressions.³ These are to be got over by various means, such as corrective thoughts, exercise of will, Japa etc. For Japa the *Sivajnana Upanishad* holds up the *Pranava*, OM, as the mantra *par excellence*. For OM is the immediate symbol of the Brahman who is the Goal of all sadhana. Its repetition is charged with power.⁴ It is to be repeated, the text adds, with a felt and full awareness of its meaning, *sānubhavam sārthanu-*

1. *Sādhana-catuṣṭaya-sampannasya viśuddha-hṛdayasya samādhau tat pratyakṣam bhavati.* (*Anandabindu Up.* 4)

2. *Brahmarahasya Up.* 18

3. *Vedantasara Up.* 7. The *Advaitamrita Up.* (12) refers to five minor obstacles to meditation: forgetfulness of one's own true nature, postponement of practice to a later hour, envelopment by darkness, perspiration and gathering of saliva in the mouth, discontent on the failure of effort to bring in quick results, distraction by varied lights during meditation.

4. *Om ityēṣa prañaso brahmaṇoḥ pratīkaḥ, tīryaccailasya uccareṇam* (6)

sandhānam. Its action in the dissolution of the obstacles and the gradual convergence of the mental *vṛttis* is lauded in high terms.

The stages of Ignorance to be crossed are described as seven: *bindu-jāgrat*, the causal pre-waking condition, *jāgrat*, waking state in which there is the first rise of the "I" and "This" feeling, *mahā-jāgrat*, the state in which the egoity of "I" takes a definite formulation, *jāgrat-svapna*, the state of waking in which the consciousness passes into dreaming (day-dream), *svapna*, state of actual dream, *svapna-jāgrat*, the waking condition in which past things are recalled and pass before the mind as a sort of dream, and finally *susupti*, the condition of dense sleep.

Of knowledge, Jnana, too there are seven stages that are spoken of: *śubheccha*, happy aspiration, *vicāranā*, enquiry, *tanumānasī*, subtilised state of the mind, *sattvāpatti*, attainment of purity, *asam-sakti*, non-attachment, *padarthābhāvanā*, realisation of the ultimate nullity of things, and *turiya*, super-consciousness, the state in which there is a natural realisation of one's identity with the Source of All.¹

For such a one who has realised the truth of the Self there is no need of meditation or samadhi.² He is the liberated while yet living, the *jīvan-mukta*, who feels his fullness everywhere,³ who is

1. We come across the same gradations in the philosophy of the Yoga Vaiśiṣṭha.

2. *Sāṅkhya-sūtram* *dhyanā-samādhi na bhavataḥ* (Advaitamṛta Up. 10)

3. *Pūrṇam ātamānam tetti*. (Brahmarahasya Up. 10.)

one with the Supreme and declares :

“I am equal in all. I am the Supreme Person. I am the Lord. I am the Excellent. I am the Felicity. Language of the tongue is not for me. Not of me is the No. I have nowhere to go. I am the inmost of the inmost.”¹

1. *Samoḥam. Pūruṣottamoḥam. Iṣoḥam. śreṣṭhōḥam. śivoḥam. Bhāṣārahitoḥam.*

Na-ityartha-rhitoḥam. Agamyanītararāhitoḥam. Abhyanītarasya apī abhyanītaragatoḥam. (Brahmanubhava Up. 20)

BHAGAVAD-GITA

This is the second edition of Swami Adideva-nanda's Gita* in Kannada with introduction, word-for-word rendering, translation and notes. True, the Gita needs no introduction but when the introduction is from the pen of Swamiji one can be sure there is some purpose in it. And true enough, there are a number of fresh questions that are discussed in his prefatory writing.

Speaking of the claims of the Gita to be an authentic scripture, Swamiji lays down three tests . which must be fulfilled by any work to qualify for the title. Is it helpful to man for the realisation of his self? Secondly, does it further his urge for helping the society? And lastly, are the truths it enunciates of universal application? Self-realisation brings peace within, dedication to the good of humanity leads to peace without. The teachings of the Gita have stood the test of time wonderfully well. Considered on all these counts the Bhagavad-gita is eminently such a scripture.

The outlook that pervades the entire work is broad, cosmic and catholic. Here are found in synthesis and reconciliation the different philosophies and the varied paths of discipline that have all along criss-crossed the Indian scene of religion

* *Srimad Bhagavadgita* Pub. Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Mysore.

cult of Krishna and Balarama; Magasthenes, the famous traveller (320 B.C.), speaks of the people of Shurasena country worshipping Krishna; Heliodorus (180 B.C.) refers to Vasudeva as the Devadeva in his Inscription on stone. But all that apart, does it really matter whether the Krishna of the Gita is the Krishna of history or the Krishna of legend? As long as the truths promulgated by Him are eternal, as long as the Personality that dominates not only the Gita but its huge backdrop of Mahabharata as well, is realisable even today in the consciousness of the seeker, the heart of the Gopi, is the physical identity of the Person too relevant?

Another question to which Swami Somanathananda refers is in his Preface. How was it possible for Krishna to give such an elaborate discourse at the centre of the battlefield when the armed hosts were waiting poised to strike? Swamiji replies, and rightly, that what was given on the occasion was the substance of what later came to be propounded in *extenso* by Vyasa. As Sridharaswamin, the famous commentator says: "Krishna Dvaipayana wrote in a seven hundred verses the counsel which the Lord gave. He wrote down generally the very verses which were uttered by Sri Krishna. But he also added verses of his own to give the connecting links." And the whole work is revered as a scripture of undoubted authority whose support is essential for any system to be admitted in the fold of authentic philosophy in India. Each chapter is called a chapter of an Upanishad—"iti śrīmadbhagavadgītāsu upaniṣatsu."

Such is the work before us. The Gita makes for easy reading, indeed. But its very simpleness is deceptive and one may pass over portions without suspecting in the least the profound sense that underlies them. Swami Adidevananda, however, guards the reader against such possibilities by drawing attention then and there in his valuable notes not only in the context of the commentary of Acharya Shankara but also that of Ramanuja.

MRIGENDRAGAMA

Continuing their good work in securing rare manuscripts of the old Agamas, editing them with scrupulous care and publishing them at regular intervals, the French Institute of Indology have now brought out this excellent edition of the *Mṛgendrāgama*,* conforming to the high standards they have set for themselves.

The *Mṛgendrāgama*, one of the *Sivāgamas* which are twenty-eight in number, is classified under *Kāmika*¹ agamas. Like all Agamas, the *Mṛgendra* has four parts: *vidyā* (*jñāna*), *kriyā*, *yoga* and *caryā pādas*. Of these the *vidyā* and *yoga pādas* are already in print and the present volume comprises the *kriyā pāda* (551 verses) and a portion of the first *paṭala* of the *caryā pāda* (129 1/2 verses) which were all that the Institute could find so far. The text is printed along with an explanation, *vṛtti*, by Bhatta Narayana Kantha. Profuse quotations from this Agama are found in many other works, especially those of Sri Aghora Sivacharya, and some of the verses quoted do not find a place in our text. Such verses which are quoted elsewhere but not found in this text are separately listed in the Appendix.

**Mṛgendrāgama (Kriyāpāda et Caryāpāda)* Edition critique par N. R. Bhatt, Institut Français d'Indologie, Pondichery.

1. which fulfil one's desires, *kāmadatāt*.

Coming to the name *Mrgendra*, the *Tantrāvalāra* which deals with such topics is silent on its derivation. Bhatta Narayana Kantha explains the significance as follows: Indra killed Vritrasura with his *vajra* (thunderbolt) and afraid of the sin of *brahma-hatyā*, brahminicide, he propitiated Vishnu. Vishnu gave him a *nārasimha kavaca* and wearing that *kavaca* (armour) Indra did further penance for a thousand years to please Siva. Siva duly appeared and communicated this Agama to Indra who had the *nārasimha kavaca*. And in as much as the recipient of this Knowledge had a *nara-simha kavaca*, the Agama came to be known as *mrgendra*—a synonym for *simha*, lion. Whether we accept this explanation as adequate or not¹, it is enough to note that *Mrgendra* is an exact equivalent of *Paśupati*, Lord of the *Paśus*, Siva who revealed the Agama to Indra. Indra communicated to Bharadvaja; Bharadvaja to Harita; and so on it has come down from *Guru* to *Śiṣya*.

The Kriya Pada consists of eight Patalas, dealing with the selection of Mantras, purifying baths, worship, *upāsana*, Mudras, ritual of Fire, Diksha (initiation), anointing etc. and preliminaries of Yoga. In the first Patala is given the genesis of the form of Mahesa :

In the beginning His Shakti, from Shakti proceeds the *Nāda* (sound), then *Bindu*, then the immutable *Omākāra*, then the alphabet covering all objects, the first Form of Mahesa. (Verse 2).

1. *mrgendra* would really mean *śiṣya*, not *nara-simha*.

The second Patala deals with seven kinds of bath. It is interesting to note that it mentions (Verse 6) *gaurava-snāna*, sanctification by the sheer touch of the feet of the Guru, as one of the purifying baths. A method of doing the *kumbhaka* inside water with *praṇava-japa* is described in verse 12.

The next two Patalas deal with ritual and sadhana of worship while the fifth dwells upon Mudras, gestures used in worship. They are the *mudrās* that seal, blockade the onrush of obstacles.¹ The descriptive plates of the Mudras are a great help in understanding this complicated technique in ritual.

The sixth Patala is on worship through Agni. The *lakṣaṇas* of vessels used in Homa, various kinds of *samit* (fuel) are elaborately dealt with. The seventh describes the preliminaries done a day before the Yaga with special reference to *kalaśa sthāpana* and *pūjā*.

The last and the longest Patala deals with *yāga-dikṣā-vidhi*, initiation for performing the Yaga. Diksha occupies a very important place in the sadhana—inner and outer—of the Tantras. As the commentator points out, *dikṣā* is that which yields knowledge and truth-state (*dīyate jñāna-sadbhāvaḥ*), and by which is destroyed the legacy of karma (*kṣīyate karmavāsanā*). It is described here as being of two kinds: 1) leading to worldly opulence, *bhautikī*; and 2) leading to liberation, *nairīṭhīkī*. It is again

2. *vighnaugha mudraṇāl, vighnasanghaṭṭanām mudraṇāt asat-tantvī karaṇāt.*

sākṣepā, dependent on other auxiliaries like fitness, observances and the like,¹ or *nirākṣepā*, independent of every other factor, self-fulfilling.

In a significant verse (68) the Agama speaks of an occult way² by which the Guru draws into himself the *jīva* of the *śiṣya*, unites it with his own consciousness and then releases it back to the disciple. The latter is thereby charged with the *śakti* of the Guru.

In an interesting passage on dreams portending good and evil, we are told that riding on a peacock, cow, horse, elephant, ascending the hill, towers etc., crossing expanses of water, rivers, wells, lakes and marshes, obtaining of gold, silver, costly jewels, fine flowers, fruit etc. indicate attainment of what is desired. So too the sight of Siddhas, Devas, sacrificial Halls. Contrarily, riding over a mule, camel, pig, falling into a pit, dipping in cow-dung, wet mud, wearing of red or dark hues, encounter with jackal, bee, crow, snake, sight of the falling of the sun, moon, drying up of the ocean and the tremor of the mountain are signs of misfortune. The portents that appear at the end of the night are the strongest; what appear at mid-night are middling; and what appear in the early part are weak. (Verse 22).

1. demanding profound knowledge of the technique of *mantra*, *muḍrā* and the manipulation of the *nāḍīs*.

2. This is again of two kinds: fulfilling immediately or in its own time.

The Charya Pada portion in the volume deals with the normal *ācarās*, conduct of the devotees of Siva, their diet, their daily routine, outer and inner etc. Detailed instructions are given to the disciple regarding his relations with the Guru.

An interesting work, ably edited with critical notes and indices.

'A RADIANT GLANCE OF SIVA'

Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo

Not many are aware of the part played by Swami Vivekananda in the life and work of Sri Aurobindo. In fact, none at all knew of it till Sri Aurobindo himself revealed this part and its significance in a biographical note written during the later years and in his talks with the disciples. Sri Aurobindo, it will be recalled, had no human *guru* as such, though he received important help from different sources on different occasions. And one of these was the unexpected guidance and direction received from Vivekananda under interesting circumstances, long after he left his body in 1902.

When Sri Aurobindo returned to India at the age of 21, after a stay of fourteen years in England, and took to the study of Indian culture and life, he came like most educated people of the time, under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda through their sayings and writings¹ And

1. Speaking of their great role in the renaissance of India, he writes : " It was in religion first that the soul of India awoke and triumphed. There were always indications, always great forerunners, but it was when the flower of the educated youth of Calcutta bowed down at the feet of an illiterate Hindu ascetic, a self-illuminated ecstatic and 'mystic', without a single trace or touch of the alien thought or education upon him, that the battle was won. The going forth of Vivekananda marked out by the Master as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake, not only to survive but to conquer " (*The Ideal of Karmayogin*).

though the Advaita Vedanta expounded and popularized by them was not relevant to the turn of Sri Aurobindo's mind, he beheld and recognized the mighty spiritual afflatus embodied in the Master.

'What was Ramakrishna?' he asks, and answers: 'God manifest in a human being.'¹ He was an *avatāra*, 'as much an *avatāra* as Christ or Caitanya'² who had a definite purpose to fulfil in the spiritual evolution of humanity, viz. to found and establish the Truth of the Unity of all spiritual experience and realization. He was bound by no man-made rules, though he chose to manifest his divinity under human conditions. Says Sri Aurobindo: "Ramakrishna, having attained by his own internal effort the central illumination, accepted several teachers in the different paths of Yoga, but always showed in the manner and swiftness of his realizations that this acceptance was a concession to the general rule by which effective knowledge must be received as by a disciple from a guru."³

Giving a considered estimate, Sri Aurobindo observes: "In the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, we see a colossal spiritual capacity first driving straight to the divine realization, taking, as it were the kingdom of heaven by violence and then seizing upon one yogic method after another and extracting the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realization and the possession of God by the

2. *Thoughts and Aphorisms*

3. *On Yoga* (II)

3. *On Yoga* (I)

power of love, by the extension of inborn spirituality into various experiences and by the spontaneous play of an intuitive knowledge."¹

And, 'What was Vivekananda? A radiant glance from the eye of Siva.'² We do not pause to dwell on the full import of this cryptic statement. It will need an exposition quite beyond the scope of this paper.

"Vivekananda was a soul of puissance, if ever there was one, a very lion among men...We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India, and we say, 'Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the souls of her children.'"³ Sri Aurobindo mentions of his contact with Vivekananda on two occasions. Note that there was no meeting between them at all during the life-time of Vivekananda. The first occasion was when Sri Aurobindo was practising *prāṇāyāma*, which started in 1904 and continued for some time. He says: "I had...direct experience of Vivekananda's presence when I was practising *hatha-yoga*. I felt his presence standing behind and watching over me. That exerted a great influence afterwards in my life."⁴

1. *On Yoga* (I).

2. *Thoughts and Aphorisms*.

3. *Bankim-Tilak-Dayananda*

4. *Mother India* June 1952: "Talks with Sri Aurobindo", by Nirodbaran.

The second was when Sri Aurobindo had been detained in the Alipore Jail (1908-1909). By that time, Sri Aurobindo had already attained the realization of the Silent, Spaceless, and Timeless Brahman—the state of *nirvāṇa*. Now, let him speak: "From the beginning, I didn't feel *nirvāṇa* to be the highest spiritual achievement. Something in me always wanted to go on farther. But, even then, I did not ask for this new experience. In fact, in *nirvāṇa*, with that peace one does not ask for anything. But the truth of the Supermind¹ was put on me. I had no idea of the Supermind when I started, and for long it was not clear to me.

"It was the spirit of Vivekananda who first gave me a clue in the direction of the Supermind. This clue led me to see how the Truth-Consciousness works in everything...He didn't say 'Supermind.' 'Supermind' is my own word. He just said to me, 'This is this, this is that' and so on. That was how he proceeded, by pointing and indicating. He visited me for fifteen days in Alipore jail and, until I could grasp the whole thing, he went on teaching me and impressed upon my mind the working of the Higher Consciousness—the Truth-Consciousness in general which leads towards the Supermind. He would not leave me until he had put it all into my head." "I never expected him and yet he came to

(1) The Supermind is the principle of Truth-Consciousness in creation—the *Rita-Cit* of the Veda, the *Vijnana* of the Upanishad, which holds the key for the plenary emergence of the Divine in the manifestation. It forms the corner-stone in the arch of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of the Life Divine and his means to translate it into action, the Integral Yoga.

teach me. And he was very exact and precise even in the minutest details."¹

A host of questions arise. How is it that Vivekananda never spoke of these ranges of Consciousness leading to the Gnosis, during his life-time? Did he not withdraw into *nirvāṇa* or the one Self, after he 'spat out the body'? Did he, and does he, still continue to be in the earth-atmosphere for the benefit of humanity struggling towards Godhead? These are all pertinent questions, but they touch upon the occult side of manifestation which would require a separate treatment. We can only say there is more in creation than meets the human ken.

1. Mother India, July 1962: 'Talks with Sri Aurobindo', by Nirodbaran.

Contribution of Swami Vivekananda To Indian Philosophy

What Vivekananda gave to Indian Philosophy was much more than a contribution. He revived it and gave it a new lease of life. For, even before decay had set in the general life of the country, her spiritual tradition of which religion and philosophy are the twin wings, had ceased to be a living force. The springs of philosophy had dried up and all that was of value in the old heritage had been covered with an overgrowth of scholastic verbiage. Philosophy had become a subject for specialists to study and expound like other sciences of medicine, astrology, astronomy etc. It was no more a live factor in the general life of the people as it had been in the hey-day of Indian civilisation. To Vivekananda must go the credit for being the first in the present age to pull back the legacy from the attic, endow it with a new life and a new garb and make it a force for governing the lives of individuals and societies

Vivekananda could do it because he himself embodied the best traditions of the Indian Quest for the Spirit and the Philosophy which expressed it in terms of the intellect. The first feature of this tradition is its universalism. It does not claim any monopoly over Truth. It admits a thousand roads to the Capital of Brahman and is always eager to

enrich itself with the gains of journeyings on other and newer paths. Vivekananda voiced this urge most emphatically, and following the example of his great Master, he approached the truths of all Faiths with a becoming humility: "I accept all religions that were in the past and worship them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of a Mohammaden. I shall enter the Christian Church and kneel before the Crucifix. I shall enter the Buddhist temple and there I shall take refuge in the Buddha and his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation trying to see the light which enlightens the heart of every one."

Secondly, he believed to the letter the declaration of the Vedanta that All is Brahman. He saw God in the lowly as much as in the high, and dedicated himself—and called upon others—to the service of God in each creature. In order that the perception of the Divine in all shall not remain only as a mental knowledge, he gave a method whereby all the faculties, the senses of man, could be trained to seek and serve the Divine in every one. In declaring that "We are servants of that God who by the ignorant is called man. There is but one basis of well-being, social, political or spiritual—to know that I and my brother are one. This is true for all *countries and all people*", he laid the basis for a unique synthesis of the way of Knowledge, of Works and of Devotion. Not that social service was something new in Indian society. The newness lay

in the turn given by Vivekananda in the change of motif. Work for the fellowmen in need, not as a debt to be paid to the collective society from whom one derives a many-sided help, not even as a deposit in the bank of Karma on the credit side for future encashment, but as a labour of love to Him who dwells in the suffering humanity. So done, it is at once a step in the enlargement of the narrow boundaries of one's consciousness and a consecration of energies in dedication to the Lord whose presence is increasingly felt and realised in the all.

He set the goal of the Vedanta before every one. But he brought to bear another Way to arrive at it. He laid stress on Shakti, the Divine Puissance at work in the Universe and called upon each individual to awake to its presence in himself, give shape to its articulations and build up the Power, first for realisation of the Divine and then for the execution of Its Purpose.

And he kept alive in himself the Vedic Agni always aflame for wider and newer realms in the Infinitude of God. To him Knowledge was not a closed book. It was a growing and expanding Power leading the progression of mankind. He said: "The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave my heart open for all of them." He thus summed up in his own person the best in the spiritual tradition of the past and linked it with the dawning future of immense possibilities. His work

in this field did not come to a close with the termination of his earthly career. It continues. It continues overtly and covertly, helping humanity to advance in the still unexplored expanses of the Divine Spirit.

Swami Vivekananda and Sanskrit

When Swami Vivekananda met Rakhal (Brahmananda) for the first time on his return from the West, Rakhal stepped forward and placed a garland of flowers on his neck. Vivekananda bowed and touched his feet and said: *Guruval guruputreṣu* (as to the Guru so unto the sons of the Guru). Rakhal replied with a smile: *Jyeṣṭha bhrātā sama pitā* (elder brother is like the father). Apart from the fine sentiments of both to which the incident testifies, it gives a peep into the Sanskrit culture and tradition Swamiji was steeped in.

Vivekananda had developed a deep love for the Sanskrit language from his childhood and studied it all his life. He had learnt it under Pundits in the orthodox way and he loved to teach it to others on Paninian lines. In fact the last engagement he fulfilled on the day of his passing was to teach Sanskrit grammar to his fellow-monks for nearly two hours in the morning. He liked to meet Sanskritists and carry on discussion with them in Sanskrit. It is recorded that once a group of Sanskrit scholars from Gujarath had come to Calcutta and were having a discussion with him. Their intention, we are told, was none too good; they wanted to defeat him in the argument but they were denied that satisfaction. During the talk Swamiji made a slight grammatical mistake and the Pundits, especially the younger ones, burst into laughter. With a grace that comes

only to the great, Vivekananda at once folded his palms and said: *Panditānām dāso'ham kṣantavyam etad skhalanam* (I am ever at the command of learned men; may my slip be forgiven).

It was not any patriotic sentiment that led him to venerate Sanskrit in the manner he did. Sanskrit is great not because scriptures like the Vedas and Upanishads are written in that language. It is because its inherent excellence, the processing it has undergone, *samskṛtam*, the level of perfection attained by the language, that it has come to be chosen as the vibrant vehicle of transmission for such a profound body of spiritual thought and experience as is embodied in these ancient scriptures. "The very sound of Sanskrit" says Vivekananda, "is musical" and we may add, *a power*.

He perceived that Sanskrit provided the basic frame for the expression and preservation of all the fundamental truths and values of the Indian heritage.¹ No teaching, no philosophy of consequence could get recognition unless it was presented in the tongue of the gods. He declared: "The very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a strength to the race. The attempts of Ramanuja and of Chaitanya and of Kabir to raise the lower classes of India show that marvellous results were attained during the life-time of those great prophets; yet the later failures have to be explained, and cause shown why the effect of

1. "Sanskrit and prestige of India go together in India. As soon as you have that, none dares anything against you. That is the one secret; take that up."

their teachings stopped almost within a century of the passing away of these great Masters. The secret is here. They raised the lower classes, they had all the wish that these should come up, but they did not apply their energies to the spreading of the Sanskrit language among the masses. Even the great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and immediate results, and translated and preached in the language of the day, Pali. That was grand, he spoke in the language of the people, and the people understood him. That was great; it spread the ideas quickly and made them reach far and wide, but along with that Sanskrit ought to have spread. Knowledge came but prestige was not there, culture was not there. It is culture that withstands shocks, not a simple mass of knowledge. You can put a mass of knowledge into the world, but that will not do it much good. There must come culture into the blood."

Vivekananda counselled the full development of the various vernaculars in the country but on the firm basis of the mother of all the languages, Sanskrit. Speaking on the direction of the growth of the Bengali language, for instance, he says: "In coining or translating technical terms in Bengali, one must, however, use all Sanskrit words for them, and an attempt should be made to coin new words. For this purpose, if a collection is made from a Sanskrit dictionary of all those technical terms, then it will help greatly the constitution of the Bengali language."

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

A forgotten Chapter of his life.*

It is good this book is written. It throws fresh light on a number of important details in the external life of Vivekananda that have remained obscure so far. Many have claimed the credit for sending him to America. But who exactly was it that found the means for the voyage? Placed in the midst of difficulties in a foreign land, he wrote again and again to his countrymen in India for effective help but without adequate response. From what quarter did he ultimately receive help? How did he manage for his expenses after his return from the West? Who supported his mother for whom he continually owned a sense of responsibility? And last, how did Narendra Nath Datta come to be known as Vivekananda?

All know that the Raja of Khetri in Rajputana was a devout disciple of Vivekananda. But it is not generally realised how deep and extensive was the nature of their God-given relationship. The author of this book had heard in his childhood many fascinating stories and anecdotes about Vivekananda from his father, Pandit Baliram Sharma, who had the privilege of attending upon him when he visited the state for the first time in 1891. This interest grew with the passage of years and led him to an exhaustive study of all available

* Pub. Oxford Book and Stationary Co., Calcutta-16.

literature about the life and mission of Vivekananda. He confesses to a feeling of disappointment that there is very little in these books that touches upon the activities in Khetri and the contributions of the state to his Cause. He felt a definite lacunae in the life of Vivekananda on this account; but for long, he could not lay his hands on any material of documentary value to fill it up.

However, it is a truth that deep aspiration always tends to fulfil itself. And luck came in the way of Beni Shankar Sharma. It was at the time of the merger of the states of Rajputana that while the old records and documents of the state of Khetri were being screened before destruction, that certain letters were found from the Swami to Maharaja Ajit Singh and to his private secretary, Munshi Jagmohanlal. Also found were letters from Mahendra Nath Datta, the Swami's younger brother and some of his *gurubhais*, to the Maharaja. These letters form the main basis of the present valuable book and many of them (hitherto unpublished) have been reproduced in it. Apart from these letters, the author also draws upon the entries into the *Waqyat Register* (of Khetri), a kind of diary maintained in the court of the Maharaja.

The first meeting between the Raja and the Swami took place on June 4, 1891, at Mount Abu where the Swami had been practising austerities in a cave and the prince had evidently gone for the summer. Greatly attracted by the personality and learning of the Swami, the Raja invited him to Khetri, an invitation that was accepted after a

And from that day Swamiji began to use the name Vivekananda for himself.

Among the other acquirements of Vivekananda at Khetri, we are told, was the turban which he started wearing at the suggestion of the Raja, to protect his head from *loo*, the vicious hot winds of Rajasthan.¹ It was also at Khetri that he studied Patanjali's Mahabhashya on Panini from Pt. Narayandas, the court Pundit of that state.

The most important topic, however, is on the subject of Vivekananda's trip to America. Who financed it? Disciples at Madras as believed by some? Any Maharaja or 'liberal minded nobles' from the South as written by others?

Neither says the author. He cites from a letter of Vivekananda to Alasinga Perumal (21-2-1893):

"So all my plans have been dashed to the ground. That is why I wanted to hurry off from Madras early. In that case I would have left months in my hand to seek out for somebody amongst our northern princes to send me over to America. But alas, it is now too late."

Then he goes on to say that he would go to Ootacamund "to see if the M-Maharaja sends me up (Maharaja of Mysore-Author). 'If' because you see I cannot be sure of any promise of a D-Raja (Dakshini Raja-Author). They are not Rajputs. A Rajput would rather die than break his promise."

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And he proceeds to analyse the situation as it then stood :

We may here recapitulate the main points of the letter for its proper appreciation, which are enumerated below with such short comments as may be essential to make them clear. 1. That the Swami depended upon the promise of a 'not very good man', we do not know who this 'not very good man' is nor is it necessary for our present purpose. 2. That the Raja of Ramnad was hesitating to fulfil his promise. We have seen how the Raja of Ramnad encouraged the Swami in his scheme and offered to help him. It was the Raja of Ramnad, who later became one of the Swami's most ardent admirers and

his disciples to sanyas by the traditional shastriac methods, nor changed their worldly names into sanyasa ones...It was after the great master's death that the 'boys' assembled in a house at Baranagore...dropped their old names, and adopted new ones in order to completely sever their connections with their past...Narendra-nath, though he also dropped his old name, did not assume any permanent name, and, sometimes assumed the name of Sacchidananda and, sometimes, that of Vividishananda, and kept changing his name frequently during his itinerant days to avoid recognition.

Speaking of the actual circumstances in which the new name was taken, the author quotes from the book *Khetri Naresh and Vivekananda* by Pt. Jhabermul Sharma (1927) who learnt it personally from Munshi Jagmohanlal, secretary to the Raja:

In his first journey to Khetri, Swamiji was sitting one day with Rajaji. Jokingly he remarked, "Swamiji, your name is rather difficult. Without a commentator it is not possible for an ordinary man to understand its meaning or implication. Nor is it easy to pronounce. Besides, your *vividiṣā kāla*, that is to say, the period within which one tries to know things is also over."

On hearing the Raja's logical argument, the Swami inquired, "Maharaj, what name would you like?"

Raja: "In my opinion, the proper name for you is Vivekananda."

moment's reflection. Their acquaintance ripened into a profound friendship during the five months of the Swami's stay in the state. Apart from their common love of the Sastras, there were many other interests which brought them closer :

Sometimes discussing religion and philosophy, sometimes going out sight-seeing, riding together, and sometimes entertaining themselves with music...Maharaja used to play on the harmonium. While the Swami would sing, the Maharaja would accompany him on the harmonium or *Vina*, oblivious of his high status as a Raja...(the Raja) also took regular lessons from him in Physics, Chemistry and Astronomy. The Swami also established a small laboratory in the topmost room of his palace which contained the necessary instruments and chemicals. The Swami also got him to purchase a powerful telescope, which was installed on the roof of the laboratory, through which he used to show to his royal disciple the movements of the stars at night and gave him practical lessons in Astronomy.

Few know that it was at Khetri that Swamiji adopted the name of Vivekananda at the instance of the Raja. There is a good deal of ignorance on the subject. The writer cites a scholar like Dr. Khitish Mohan Sen stating that Sri Ramakrishna named him as Vivekananda taking the cue from Keshab Chandra Sen and rightly observes :

It is a well-known fact that Ramakrishna Paramahansa, in his life-time, neither initiated

his disciples to sanyas by the traditional shastriac methods, nor changed their worldly names into sanyasa ones...It was after the great master's death that the 'boys' assembled in a house at Baranagore...dropped their old names and adopted new ones in order to completely sever their connections with their past...Narendra-nath, though he also dropped his old name, did not assume any permanent name, and, sometimes assumed the name of Sacchidananda and, sometimes, that of Vividishananda, and kept changing his name frequently during his itinerant days to avoid recognition.

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drew his carriage himself on his return to India after his most successful spiritual conquest of the West. But here we find him hesitating to fulfil his promise. It seems that though he promised to help, he neither gave the necessary help nor said a definite 'no' to the Swami. This ambiguity must have caused great anguish in the Swami's mind. 3. That the Swami's Bhagattas (disciples) at Madras, who had formed themselves into a committee under the leadership of Mr. Alasinga Perumal and who were going begging from door to door for the purpose of raising the necessary funds, which seems to have made the biographers assert that 'it was here in Madras that he secured the funds where-with he was enabled to go to America', were unable to raise the necessary amount by subscription and the Munshi had lost hope in them, though they were still continuing in their efforts. 4. That Swami was determined to go to Europe and America and he would, if the scheme for raising funds did not materialise, (it is clear from this that up to that day the necessary amount had not been collected), make an effort to go even on foot *via* Afghanistan. 5. That some 3,000 rupees were needed by way of passage money and other requirements for the Swami, which the Munshi suggested should be given from the State coffers. Here we get the answers to the question as to why the Swami asked his disciples when on the first occasion they had collected a sum of Rs. 500 to distribute it amongst the poor. His estimated

cost of the journey was about Rs 3,000, against which the amount raised was only Rs. 500...He was wounded at the small response to this great mission and it was for that reason that he left everything to the 'mother's will'.

Munshi Jagmohanlal, when he reached Madras and saw everything with his own eyes and came to know of the Swami's predicament, assured him that he would see that his requirements were met by his Chief. But he had his own doubts, about which he wrote to the Maharaja, whether the Council of State would agree to this unbudgetted expenditure.

The Raja's reaction to the points noted above was spontaneous and he readily agreed with the Swami's desire to go to America 'where he had such a grand point to aim at', and he "would indeed be happy if the world could derive any benefit from one whom I am fortunate and proud to call my Guroo." He also agreed to the Munshi's suggestion for giving Rs 3000 to the Swami for the purpose and devised a way to overcome the difficulty about which the Munshi had hinted in his letter. Instead of giving the money from the State Treasury, he suggested that it may be given from him *Hukum Kharuch* (personal funds). And then we find him chastising the Munshi for not informing him about this financial difficulty earlier, so that he would not have allowed so much time to be lost unnecessarily.

There is one interesting chapter, *Need for Credentials*, which narrates the ordeals to which Vivekananda was subjected due to petty jealousies and religio-political rivalries. Even before sailing to America, we learn he had approached Col. Olcott for introductions to friends; but the President of the Theosophical Society not only did not recommend but went to the length of warning his friends against him! Christian missionaries, Brahmos and even orthodox sections in Bengal worked against him, openly and behind the scenes. He wrote repeatedly to friends in India¹ suggesting that they hold meetings, pass resolutions recognising his representative character and thanking the American people for their kindness to him. It was left to the Raja of Khetri to hold a special Durbar on March 4, 1895, pass a resolution in those terms, and send twenty copies of the same for circulation in the States.²

1. In a letter to the "brothers of the Math" in 1894 he wrote: "I could do much more work, but for the Brahmos and Missionaries who have been opposing me unceasingly and the Hindus of India too did nothing for me. I mean, if the Hindus of Calcutta or Madras had held a meeting and passed a resolution recognising me as their representative, and thanking the American people for receiving me with kindness, things would have progressed appreciably. But it is over a year, and nothing is done. Of course I never relied on the Bengalees, but the Madrascers could not do anything either..."

2. In contrast to the apathy of his own countrymen, Vivekananda was the object of wide adulation in the States. The writer quotes a letter from an American disciple to the *Brahmaradin*:

India had better at once make clear her title to the ownership of the Swami. They are about to write his biography for the National Encyclopaedia of the United States of America, thus making of him an American citizen. The time may come when even as seven cities

Not only did the Raja arrange for the journey to America but he also provided funds for his old mother's expenses, a matter on which Vivekananda had deep feelings. How on the return of the Swami to India, the Raja readily offered to meet all his requirements including increased expenses due to ill-health and how even after the passing of Vivekananda, the Raja continued to support his family members is a story that is told with meticulous regard to accuracy,—told not to make any parochial claims but so that the truth be recorded somewhere.

All the pains taken by conscientious author have been worthwhile. The role of Khetri can no longer remain veiled. Future editions of Vivekananda's biographies will need to be revised or modified in the light of the historical data presented by Beni Shanker Sharma.

disputed with each other for the honour of having given birth to Homer, seven countries may claim our master as theirs, and thus rob India of the honour of producing one of the noblest of her children.

Bagala in the Guise of Sarasvati

Bagalā in the guise of Sarasvati — that is how Vivekananda describes Sri Sarada Devi who embodied the Spirit of Sri Ramakrishna and made his Grace living to innumerable souls even after his withdrawal from the physical world. From a simple village girl to the august Motherhood of spiritual giants like Brahmananda — that is the story of Sarada Devi told in utmost detail in the book, *Holy Mother*¹ by Swami Nikhilananda. The author is particularly qualified to write this biography for he was himself initiated into the Ramakrishna Order of Monks by Sarada Devi and had the privilege of knowing and moving with her personally.

Saradamani was born at Jayarambati (Bengal) on December 22, 1853, her birth being heralded by two significant visions vouchsafed to both of her parents, testifying to her superhuman origin. She was married to Sri Ramakrishna in 1859 when she was hardly six. Though she had a number of experiences of the supraphysical kind as she grew up, the most important one was the one at Dakshinেশwar on June 5, 1872. For it was on that day that her husband worshipped her as the Divine Mother. That may be said to be a turning point in her life; Sri Ramakrishna either installed the Divine Presence in her or awakened the divinity in

1. *Holy Mother* By Swami Nikhilananda. Pub. George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

her on that memorable night. The author gives a graphic description of the ceremony, *śoḥaṣi Pūjā*, and remarks :

“...most significant. For Sri Ramakrishna it signified the final destruction of lust and the complete triumph of the spirit over matter, the total suppression of the animal in man. He recognised divinity where ordinary men are least disposed to see it. Sri Ramakrishna, through this worship, gave a special status to his wife, rare in the spiritual history of the world...By this act he made her the full sharer of his spiritual glory. She attained the exalted position of a teacher without going through the usual disciplines practised by saints.”

This is not to say that Sarada Devi had all smooth sailing. The biographer describes vividly the several austerities she underwent e.g. the Panchatapa, subjection to fivefold heat, the several penalties she had to pay by way of physical sufferings as the price for the acceptance of devotees and disciples along with their legacies (good and bad), and the inconveniences she had to put up with for daring to transgress petty social customs when they conflicted with her sense of duty to God.

Though many of his devotees, encouraged by Sri Ramakrishna, had come to regard her as their spiritual mother even during his life-time, it was only after his passing in 1886, that she came to assume her rightful role as the Shakti who linked the disciples to the Master and made his vast

spiritual estate accessible and available to all who sought for it. The author narrates the circumstances in which she was led to give her first initiation while at Brindavan :

"One day Sri Ramakrishna appeared before her and asked her to give Swami Yogananda formal initiation. He even told her the mantra with which she should initiate him. Holy Mother thought it was a freak of her mind...But the vision was repeated on each of the two days following. On the third day, she said to the Master: 'I do not even speak to Yogen. How can I initiate him?' Sri Ramakrishna asked her to have Yogin-Ma with her at the time of initiation. Swami Yogananda also, in a vision, received similar instruction from the Master. At last the Mother gave him the initiation and Swami Yogananda thus became her first disciple. This was the beginning of a new chapter in her life."¹

Once started there was no stopping. She was called upon to take up the spiritual ministry in succession to Sri Ramakrishna and for full thirty years she gave all she was and all she had in furtherance of the spread of the Master's Message.

1. In an interesting passage the author observes "Generally the Mother needed only a few minutes to initiate a disciple. Someone later asked Swami Saradananda why he took half an hour to perform this task. The Swami said that Holy mother could tell by a glance or a touch whether the Master had accepted the aspirant, whereas he required long meditation to be assured of this acceptance."

Whether it was in the matter of choosing fit disciples or of reaching the Grace to the needy or of accepting the offerings from people, Sarada Devi did nothing on her own : she was exclusively guided by Sri Ramakrishna in a very concrete way. She was in constant, palpable touch with him and regarded her own work done when she put others in contact with him. Swami Nikhilananda records in these pages instructive accounts of her dealings with men and women of all conditions in life, with disciples, eastern and western, and brings out her personality which evoked the veneration of many a spiritual stalwart and drew the hearts of all who came under her influence.

Her instructions were always direct, couched in the simplest terms. On Japa for instance :

“ When a pure soul performs japa, he feels as if the holy name bubbles up spontaneously from within himself. He does not have to make an effort to repeat the name.

“ The natural tendency of the mind is to run this way or that. Through Japa it is directed to God. While repeating God's name, if one sees His form and becomes absorbed in it, then the Japa stops.

“ Regularity should be observed in the practice of Japa and meditation. It is true that there are certain auspicious moments when the mind becomes easily collected. But no one can say when the auspicious moment will come. It

comes so suddenly that one has no hint of it beforehand...The conjunction of day and night is the most auspicious time for calling on God."

While she was all for spiritual freedom, she took care not to disturb unnecessarily the faith of the laity in the governing conventions of the society. On being asked why, she replied: "The Master was not born to break traditions."

The Maharshi and Somerset Maugham

Of the number of books that have appeared during the last decade on the Sage of Arunachala, after his Mahasamadhi, the *Sadhu's Reminiscences*¹ is singular in its quality of content, chasteness of expression and delicacy of taste. From the beginning to the close it is one moving document of a soul's gratitude to its Maker. Full of tender feeling for the person of the Maharshi — which the reader cannot help sharing — this record of significant events in the last fifteen years of the physical life of the Sage by Major A. W. Chadwick who had the privilege of staying with him at close quarters during that period, will be welcomed for more than one reason. For apart from giving remarkably accurate accounts of events that throw a good deal of light on the personality of the Maharshi the author has rendered signal service in exploding some of the myths and legends that have been circulating with none-too-happy implications. He gives, for instance, a first-hand account of the meeting of the famous novelist, Somerset Maugham, with the Maharshi, and in so doing he exposes much of the fiction that has grown round that visit.

Mr. Chadwick it was who arranged for the meeting and here is what he says:

“He was brought to the Ashram by a friend of mine...They had gone to the Dak Bungalow

1. By Sadhu Arunachala (Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai)

to take their lunch, but finding it full, had come to the Ashram. They asked me if I could find somewhere for them where they could have the meal they had brought with them. I arranged for one of the small rooms near my own...At the end of the meal, which they had taken on the verandah with Somerset Maugham sitting more or less in the sun, he fainted...It was probably a slight sun-stroke, though he himself said that he had been liable to such black-outs occasionally since birth. We carried him to my room and laid him on my bed. I then went to Bhagavan and told him what had happened and asked him, when he went out for his stroll at about 2 O'clock, to come to my room and see Somerset Maugham who was now unfit to come to the Hall, and Bhagavan agreed.

"I met Bhagavan on the way and as we approached my room Somerset Maugham was just coming out, he said that he now felt better and was on his way to the Hall. I told him to go back to the room and sit down as Bhagavan had come to him instead. Bhagavan and Somerset Maugham sat opposite to each other for about half-an-hour without uttering a word. At the end of which Somerset Maugham looked nervously in my direction and said, 'Is there any need to say anything?'

'No' replied Bhagavan, 'silence is best. Silence is itself conversation.'

"After some further period Bhagavan turned to me and in his childlike way said, 'I think I had better be going, they will be looking for me'."

That is what happened. Somerset Maugham never sat in the Hall as stated by him in his book nor was he thrown into Samadhi as believed by some.

Mr. Maugham prides himself on being a debunker of persons. The table has been neatly turned. He has written somewhere that lots of Maharshi literature is being sent to him by well-meaning people. Mr. Chadwick describes how it was Maugham who *asked* for material for his writing and added, throwing bait in the ways of his world, that 'if he wrote anything it would be wonderful advertisement for the Ashram and the Maharshi'!

Apart from giving a succinct account of the Maharshi's life and teaching, the author quotes many observations of his which are of profound import. Bhagavan's explanation that for a Jnanin there is no suffering as such though the body may feel the pain resolves many contradictions. His fondness for the Hill of Arunachala where he beheld glittering assemblies of Siddhas, and which he described as 'the top of the spiritual axis of the earth' which must have 'another mountain exactly at the opposite side of the globe, the corresponding pole of the axis' is described with understanding and effect. Incidentally Mr. Chadwick gives the interesting information that there is evidence of such a Centre somewhere in the Andes at the corresponding point on the other side. And there is much else besides that makes the reading spiritually rewarding.

MAHARSHI, THE MAN

Quite a large number of books have appeared on the Philosophy and Teaching of Sri Ramana Maharshi, either as expositions of his original cryptic writings or as accounts of Talks or as independent treatises. All of them throw light on some aspect or other of his Path of Introspection. But the *Letters*¹ is something totally different, consisting as it does of simple letters written by a lady-devotee to her brother reporting and commenting on day to day events that took place in the august presence of Bhagavan. There is everything about the Maharshi in these letters, his reminiscences, his way of dealing with animals, helping aspirants correcting egotists, his views on men and things etc. etc. There are in all 130 letters spread over a period of two years and what emerges most prominently from these engaging accounts is the benevolent personality of the Sage, his human aspect which endeared him to so many, devotees and non-devotees.

Speaking of his love for animals, the author records how once the squirrel which came for its daily feed of nuts from the hands of the Sage got impatient as he was engaged in reading the Paper and when he stretched out his hand with the nuts

¹ *Letters from Sri Ramanashramam* By Suri Nagamma. Pub. Sri Ramanashramam.

after completing the reading, the little animal bit his fingers. Playfully, he scolded it and the next day he kept the nuts in front of the squirrel without feeding it himself. But the pet would not touch them; it sat near him, ran over his body, looked at him and so on till he was again moved to feed it with his own hand. The author quotes incidents regarding less domestic animals like tigers during the earlier days of the Sage. All these are authentic because it is the Maharshi himself who is directly quoted reminiscing about them.

Many wonder how is it that the Maharshi was well acquainted, with Vedantic texts and other scriptures specially as he had no opportunity to study them in the usual way. The Maharshi gives the answer. It appears an elderly companion (during the pre-ashram days) used to bring a number of Vedantic books for study but would not understand them at all. But he was persistent and would make himself miserable. Seeing that, the Maharshi felt a sympathy for him and started taking up the books, reading and explaining to him the contents. "So when I took those books in order to read them myself, and tell him what was in them, I found that what all was written therein had already been experienced by myself. I was surprised. I wondered, 'What is all this? It is already written here in these books about myself!'"

Some of the most touching portions are those dealing with his love for Arunachaleshwara, whose *prasadam* he would take reverentially, exclaiming with emotion, *appāṅku pillai adakkam* (the son is

be holden to the father). His comments on the famous Dravida Shishu, the explanation of the symbology of Sri Dakshinamurti and his meticulous knowledge of the spiritual content of the Puranas are thought-provoking.

Alongside these interesting sidelights on the Personality of the Jnanin in action, there are plenty of profound observations and discussion of philosophical and yogic import. For instance, his description of a mighty stir of *aham sphurana* of which one becomes aware when all else dies down in the being, his affirmation of a Chaitanya Shakti that is at the root of all that is, his emphatic statement that the Heart is the real source and the Sahasrara reflects its lustre like the moon for the sun, his description of the Guru as one to whom one's mind is attuned, his authentic remarks about the active way in which he Jnanins help the world in its travail, — all these are points to ponder over. One cannot be too grateful to Suri Nagamma for the pains she has taken in recording and reporting the life around the Sage in the frank and disarming manner she has done. It is evident she has been in tune with the Spirit of the Master and there is no doubt this valuable book would set many others in communion with that Exemplar of Jnana and Love who stepped right out of the pages of the Upanishad.

SECTION THREE
MYSTICISM

THE TAROT

Hermetism is an ancient system of Philosophy largely developed and bequeathed by the older order of Mystics in Egypt. The central feature of its Teaching is that the Creation of which we are a part is of one piece. Innumerable though the gradations of Existence be, they are but several emanations from One Being, governed by One Law. Everything is related to all else; what happens here has its repercussions everywhere else. As above, so below. Each individual formation in the universe is a projection of the One Being planted in the multi-tiered field of evolution. The destiny of each is to grow in the image of the Father-Soul and, rich with the gains of evolution, to join with It ultimately: *Reintegration*. The corpus of knowledge covering the processes of the working of the several Forces and Beings that make this evolution possible, the means of participating in this grand universal Action and thereby forging one's own destiny, forms the *occult* content of this Mystic tradition. *Tarot*¹ is the quintessence of Hermetic Occultism, preserved in a series of illustrated Cards, 22 major and 56 minor, each comprising one *arcana*, mystery.

Every card has a Figure, a Hebrew letter and a sign. Correctly interpreted and worked out in its

1. *The Tarot By Mouna Sadhu.* Publishers: Allen & Unwin Ltd., London.

full symbolism, each *arcanum* reveals the secret of the working of a particular sphere of life. The present treatise is the result of over thirty years of patient study, research and verifying practice on the part of the author who has had the benefit of looking into rare original parchments and receiving initiations from recognised masters of the Science.

Mouni Sadhu makes it clear at the very outset that occultism must be distinguished from spirituality and emphasises again and again that, for those who are on the active spiritual path, occultism has little of benefit to offer. Its principal role, as he sees it, is to *enlarge the domain of the mind*, prepare the consciousness to expand and familiarise itself with realms of Being other than the physical, acquire a certain mastery over the environments and generally to equip oneself for the inevitable journey to the Spirit. The *Tarot*, writes the author, is 'a useful instrument of cognition', an 'algebra of occultism'; it embraces Alchemy, Astrology, Kabbalah, Magic, and other sciences of practical import. "The Tarot is neutral; neither good nor evil in itself, just like figures which can express any quantity, suitable or unsuitable, true or false. The whole system is based on the Universal Principle which manifests itself in every sphere of life. We may call it the 'Law' (*Tetragrammaton* or *Tetrad* of Hermetists). The symbols used are letters of the old Hebrew alphabet, plus figures and numbers. Three veils for three worlds. This is comfortable, for knowing the meaning of such a letter-symbol, and so on, that is, the fixed idea behind it, we can

operate just as a mathematician does with algebraic formulas and terms."

Each *arcanum* is abundantly illustrated and presented in a number of lessons, each lesson covering a single topic. The precise method of applying these occult theorems is shown. The learned writer has, however, taken care not to say too much for fear of misuse. He has taken pains to deliver as much of helpful knowledge as possible in understandable terms and is, on that account, entitled to the special gratitude of all who are interested in the Science of Occultism. While it is not possible to follow the exposition step by step within the limits of this brief study, we should like to cite a few extracts from these lessons for the fresh light they throw on many of the phenomena puzzling the modern mind.

Speaking of the advantages of learning the art of exteriorisation, separation of oneself from the physical body in a subtle way, the author writes: "If you can exteriorise even partially at the moment when your body receives an injury, you will be healed much quicker and more surely than otherwise. In such a case the *tourbillons*,¹ and the ganglions of your astral body, will have been only slightly affected, or even not at all, and then the *astrosome*² works quickly and effectively to repair the damage. Some fakirs make use of this method when they allow their bodies to be cut or pierced.

1. "Astral creations of force which are the bases of all astral mental realisations"

2. Astral body.

The returning astrosome heals everything in a short time. I remember an instance in my own life when I made a spontaneous exteriorisation almost unconsciously, when my body was in great danger. It fell from a considerable height, and rolled down a stony hill; but as 'I' was then momentarily 'apart', the injuries were only superficial."

In an interesting passage the writer points out how, "long before there were Western physicians, Hindu occultists knew that sound emits calories, exciting movement by their impulses of power." "Some fakirs have been able to raise themselves into air for some time just by the use of a certain sound, while being under special nervous tension." Drawing attention to the use of sound-vibrations in battles, in calamities and in occult practices, the author remarks: "I have heard it said, that the insincere laughter of some people is able to crack the glasses on a table." No greater compliment to the destructive role of falsehood could be given!

We know that absention from non-vegetarian food is commended for seekers of the higher Path. Why is it so? "Vegetarian food fosters instinctive moods, while meat creates animistic passions. In tropical countries the by-products of a meat diet are well substituted by the richness of the astral solar emanations...Meat often contains bad astral, that is, it is often magnetically bound with the phantom (lower part of the astrosome) of the animal, frightened, angry or full of hate during the process of hunting and killing. We should not forget that a phantom directs the processes of decomposition

and the returning of the dead body to Nature. How unfavourable it would be for your body, if in its stomach, involutionary work is being done on the substances in it by a foreign phantom, which belongs to the dead animal?"

Repeatedly has the Mother said that if we are well-protected by being in the proper poise of consciousness, no harm can befall us from the ill-will or even occult practices of others. If we are so immune, the evil force redounds, on its source. How does it happen and why? Here is an explanation: "Nothing perishes in Nature. If the action cannot hit the original target, it will act on some other entity, which will be the one most tied to the astral tourbillon by its astrosome. And who will that be? Of course in the first place, the operator or sender himself, and the energy he has created will react against himself. This is known as the 'return blow'." What the author adds further on is interesting:

"In order to avoid such return blows, representatives of black magic always secure themselves in their magic operations, by directing the force of a vortex¹ against two persons, ensuring that it is much stronger against the true target than against the substitute. Example: a sickness is directed against you, but in the case of failure, also to a dog, a horse, and so on, or on another very passive human being from whom the magician cannot expect his arrow to rebound."

1. a astral creation of force

Mouni Sadhu devotes a large number of pages to the subject of what happens after physical death, the stages of the onward journey of the disembodied being, the various possibilities—good and bad—in the subtle-physical planes of transit etc. Western occult tradition is one with the teaching of the Upanishad: as in life, so in death. What you are while living in the body determines what you will be when you cast off the body. The treatment is elaborate and instructions for helping the departed are given in sufficient detail. However, one has a feeling that the author does not give as much weight to the innate power of the soul, which is a divine emanation, in these states of transit as he does to the influence of forces and beings *en route*. He does well, happily, to underline the protection afforded to the journeying soul by the Guru, by the Great Ones active on earth.

Speaking of *astrology*, the writer observes that it 'catches just the sphere of destiny.' He commends the saying that the stars incline but do not compel, and points out that astrology exists for an average man but not for those who exercise their will-power to fulfil their chosen aims. On the matter of birth-days and anniversaries this is what he writes: "It is interesting to note, that the fulcrum of our relation with the whole outer world—in time and space—is subconsciously based on *natural astrology*. Take our measurement of time: as the basic element we have rightly taken the way and time of the Earth's passage round the sun...But there are also purely occult reasons for giving importance to the revolu-

tions of our mother-planet. It passes through different *clichés*¹ in time and space, and these are related to one another. In its passage through the space around the Sun, the Earth each time encounters the same position as it did exactly one year ago. The clichés of happenings are closest to us on their anniversaries. That is why we celebrate our birthdays."²

And at the end of his magnificent exposition covering over 470 pages of closely printed matter, the learned author concludes: "Several ways lead to Truth, and one of them...is that of Hermetism, the Tarot...As with every attainment, Reintegration is always the result of a definite effort...Our older Brethren have passed along the whole Path... One of the milestones on that Path for us, as we are now on this planet, is the traditional Tarot, presented in this book for those who are able:

to will, to dare, to know and to keep silent."

To know and yet be silent—this is the first and the last lesson in Occultism.

1. "Surrounding conditions. *Clichés* may belong to the past, present or future. They are impressed on the subtle matter of astral planes."

2. *Vide* Sri Aurobindo on the topic: "There is a rhythm (one among many) in the play of the world-forces which is connected with the sun and the planets. That makes the birthday a day of possible renewal when the being is likely to be more plastic."

THE MYSTICS

"I write as one who is sympathetic to mysticism and who believes that mystical experience is in touch with that cosmic Spiritual Presence toward which the great world religions all dimly grope." This statement of Mr. Stace* may be said to reflect accurately the spirit of his approach and the trend of this study. The book opens with a balanced and exhaustive Introduction to the subject discussing what Mysticism is and what it is not, underlining the common features of this Experience across all time and distance and mentioning the several interpretations put on the same phenomenon in different mental climates. This is followed by representative selections from the different sections of the spiritual literature of the world which highlight their respective mystical traditions. There are excerpts from the Upanishads, Sri Aurobindo's *The Life Divine*, Buddhist, Taoist and the Zen texts, Plotinus, famous writings in Christian, Islamic and Jewish Mysticism, and even from Arthur Koestler who has lately shown what an ignoramus he is when he begins to write on the subject of Yoga.

Discussing what is mysticism, the author quotes William James: "Our normal consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special

*The Teachings of the Mystics. By Walter T. Stace. Pub. New American Library, 501, Madison Ave. New York.

type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the flimsiest of screens, there lie, potential forms of consciousness entirely different." The mystical consciousness is one such form. *Mystic*, he adds, does not mean all that is 'mystic' or what is 'occult'. It is a state of consciousness which cannot be described or analyzed in terms of any of the elements of the sensory-intellectual consciousness with which it is wholly incommensurable.' The author excludes all visions and voices from the category of the mystical on the ground that they are composed of the elements of our sensory-intellectual consciousness. He rightly anticipates objections to this exclusion. For visions and voices can and do form part of the transcript of high spiritual and mystical experiences. Supernal realities do take these sensible forms when they impinge upon certain tiers of the human consciousness. Nor do we agree with the author in totally excluding the conceptual element from mystic experience. Certainly there is no thought-activity of the usual kind in that state of consciousness but Truth-Ideas can very well present themselves to the perceiving or silent consciousness. Be that as it may, let us follow the author in his analysis of the main characteristics of mystic experiences.

First, he writes, "they involve the apprehension of an ultimate non-sensuous unity in all things, a oneness or a One to which neither the senses nor the reason can penetrate." That One is variously described as God, as something Impersonal in terms of Life or Mind or Self. Further there are two kinds

of mysticism : *extrovertive* in which the Unity or the One is apprehended outward, in the external world, and the *introvertive* which turns inward and finds the One within oneself. Speaking of the process and the nature of the development of the introvertive kind of mystical consciousness, Mr. Stace refers in passing to the 'Yoga-techniques of India' and mentions in illustration the 'breathing exercises' undertaken to transcend the sensory intellectual consciousness. He also writes : " A second method is to keep repeating in one's mind some short formula of words over and over again till the words lose all meaning..." We are afraid the author has not only taken a very narrow view of Yoga but also totally missed the point even within that limited segment.¹

The author is profoundly impressed by a passage in the Mandukya Upanishad, which he records, sums up in a few words all that could be and has been said all the world over about this Consciousness attained on the mystic heights. "Beyond the senses, beyond the understanding, beyond all expression...it is the pure unitary consciousness, wherein awareness of the world and of multiplicity

1. The author cites the testimony of poet Tennyson who had the experience of melting into infinity by simply repeating his own name to himself, to support his point that 'any non-sense words' may be repeated. 'It does not seem to matter what is chosen as the single point of concentration, whether it be one's breathing, or the sound of one's own name, or one's navel, or anything else, provided only it serves to shut off all other mental content.' Obviously the author is not acquainted with the Science of the Mantra, the Potent Word, which has played such an important part in the development of the Indian spiritual and mystic tradition.

is completely obliterated. It is ineffable peace. It is the Supreme Good. It is One without a second. It is the Self."

An undifferentiated unity, a *pure* consciousness, he emphasises, are the main characteristics of this state. This consciousness, he further notes, has both negative and positive tones: peace, joy, bliss are the inalienable features of 'the positive consciousness'. whereas on the negative side there is a sheer Emptiness, called Void in Buddhist thought, Nothingness or Desert or Wilderness in Christian mystic literature. And in an interesting passage, the author observes:

"Usually the two sides of the paradox are expressed in metaphors. The commonest metaphor for the positive side is light and for the negative side darkness. This is the darkness of God.' It is called darkness because all distinctions disappear in it just as all distinctions disappear in a physical darkness. We must not say that what we have here is a light in the darkness. For that would be no paradox. The paradox is that the light *is* the darkness, and the darkness *is* the light...Dionysius the Areopagite, a Christian, speaks of God as 'the dazzling obscurity which outshines all brilliance with the intensity of its darkness'. And the Tibetan Book of the Dead puts the same paradox in the words, 'the clear light of the Void'. In Dionysius

1. *Vide* the Isha Upanishad: They (enter) as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone (verse 9), or (verse 12). Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Non-Birth.

of the Mystic. For instance, he points out how Nirvana in the Buddhist scriptures is not something negative, a 'total annihilation' as understood in the West but a state of positive bliss; how Nirvana is the 'only mystical element in Buddhism, all other elements being rationalistic and skeptical.'

Mr. Stace is at his best in his analysis of the descriptions given by mystics in the East and West of the supreme experience of union with God. He shows how while in some of the traditions of Indian Vedanta and men like Plotinus¹ it is openly declared that there is no distinction left between the soul and God, it was a heresy in orthodox Christian and Islamic theology to say so. According to them the gulf between God and man, the Creator and the creature, is impassable. Christian mystics like St. Theresa ignored this dogma and went on to describe the union as they experienced it. Meister Eckhart's language tended to be heretical and he had to defer

1. "He belongs to Him and is one with Him, like two concentric circles; they are one when they coincide, and two only when they are separated. It is only in this sense that the Soul is other (than God)... That which is divine is ineffable, and cannot be shown to those who have not had the happiness to see it. Since in the vision there were not two things, but seer and seen were one (for the seeing was no seeing but a merging), if a man could preserve the memory of what he was when he was mingled with the Divine, he would have in himself an image of Him. For he was then one with Him, and retained no difference, either in relation to himself or to others. Nothing stirred within him, neither anger nor concupiscence nor even reason or spiritual perception or his own personality...Such is the life of gods and of godlike and blessed men; a liberation from all earthly bonds, a life that takes no pleasure in earthly things, a flight of the alone to the Alone." (Plotinus)

to the Church by explaining away his transcriptions. Ruysbroeck employed the imagery of heat and iron to illustrate the nature of the union, each interpenetrating the other and yet maintaining separate existence.

Ekhart's account of the 'Birth of Christ in the soul' which 'is impossible without a complete withdrawal of the senses', and 'a reaching inward of ourselves to the apex of the soul', strongly reminds us of the birth of the Gods in man spoken of in the mystic hymns of the Veda. "This birth takes place in the core or essence or apex of the soul, which is pure unity without multiplicity, the central silence¹ there where no creature may enter or an idea." (Ekhart).

Equally graphic are the metaphors of Ruysbroeck. He calls the Unity undifferentiated *Darkness* in which 'is born an incomprehensible light which is the Son of God'; elsewhere he calls it Nudity or the 'dark silence in which all lovers lose themselves.' He also speaks of the 'wayless abyss' which is *onefold*. "The God-seeing man..." he writes, "can always enter, naked and unencumbered with images, into the inmost part of this spirit... If it (the spirit) observes itself, it finds a distinction and otherness between itself and God; but where it is burnt up (in the fire of love) it is undifferentiated and without distinction, and therefore it feels nothing but unity."

1. Akin to the 'vast and profound solitude, in an immense and boundless desert' of St. John to which the author refers later on.

we see that the obscurity, or the darkness, is the brilliance, and in the Tibetan Book we see that the Void itself is a clear light."

The author draws a clear distinction between Mysticism and Religion. Mystic experience may or may not take a religious form. But we may add, it always partakes of a spiritual character. For the consciousness that receives the mystical experience can only do so to the extent it is freed (may be temporarily) from the hold of the physical senses and opens to what is beyond them, the supra-physical or the spiritual. The same experience may be vouchsafed to the believer as to the unbeliever, provided the being or the consciousness is ready to expand beyond its habitual limits and the hour has arrived.

The Selections start with the Upanishads¹ which are, says the author, 'among the oldest records of mysticism in the world...of unsurpassable depth of spirituality'. He draws attention to the fact that though Vedanta is considered to be a philosophy, an intellectual product, it 'is in reality rooted in mysticism.' He points out that *māyā* in the Upanishads did not originally mean 'illusion' as commonly understood but signified a Power of Brahman producing the world.

Next to the Upanishad, the editor turns to Sri Aurobindo whom he regards as 'the direct spiritual descendant of those seers' and writes :

1. From the Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka and the whole of the Svetasvatara.

"We must not, of course, think of Sri Aurobindo's work as a mere wooden reproduction of the ancient wisdom. This is a charge which can with some justice be brought against some contemporary Indian philosophers. But it cannot be brought against Indian mystics. For they are by nature inspired men, not copyists. Along with the identity of spirit as between the Upanishads and Aurobindo there has, of course, been change of form."

Observing that 'his English style is in many respects exceedingly beautiful and powerful', Mr. Stace cites the following passage from the *The Life Divine* (from which all the selections in this section are taken) as a 'beacon light of his own mystical illumination...of very great importance':

'At the gates of the transcendent stands that mere and perfect spirit described in the Upanishads, luminous, pure, sustaining the world..., without flaw of duality, without scar of division, unique, identical, free from all appearance of relation and of multiplicity,—the pure Self of the Adwaitins, the inactive Brahman, the transcendent Silence. And the mind when it passes those gates suddenly...receives a sense of the unreality of the world and the sole reality of the Silence which is one of the most powerful and convincing experiences of which the human mind is capable'.

The other Selections are indeed most interesting. Attention is pointedly drawn in his commentary by the author to the key concepts in the several writings

of the Mystic. For instance, he points out how Nirvana in the Buddhist scriptures is not something negative, a 'total annihilation' as understood in the West but a state of positive bliss; how Nirvana is the 'only mystical element in Buddhism, all other elements being rationalistic and skeptical.'

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Speaking of the 'Dark' night of the soul', for which the mystic St. John of the Cross is famous, the author points out that it has two different meanings: one, a state of blankness of the mind and senses in respect of sensations, images and concepts, and two, the period of despair in which the seeker feels forsaken by the Lord.

After reading the sublime contents of the book, passage after passage linked by the perspicacious commentary of the editor, the last chapter 'Retrospect and Prospect' comes as an anticlimax. What are the prospects of Mysticism in the future of the world? asks the author and answers: willy nilly the world will continue and with it Religion and with Religion spiritual values and mysticism will manage to survive. This is the negative note on which he ends. He does not agree with those who perceive a line of purposive ascent in the evolution of the human race. He avers that there is no definite purpose or plan in the career of the universe. For, he seriously writes, 'Certainly no evidence of this is to be found in Darwinism or in any later version of the theory of biological evolution.' As if Physical Science could hold the light for a totally different dimension of existence to which this whole book bears such resounding testimony! If there be one truth which all the diverse writings collected in this volume emphasise it is that the supreme end of all life is the spiritual. All endeavour in the universe is towards a progressive evolution of the central Consciousness from the bases of sub-conscience or in-conscience to the heights of super-

conscience, with the corresponding evolution of appropriate forms for the rising Consciousness. All mystical experience, all progressive thinking points to the gradual growth of the mental consciousness of man into a scale that is supermental—call it mystic, call it gnostic—and as this higher consciousness proceeds to establish and extend itself on those levels of humanity which are ready for it, the age of Mysticism, the reign of the supramental Spirit will have begun.

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES

"An American student was possessed of intense religious faith and aspiration. Though well-read in the sacred scriptures of the world, especially those of the Hindus, he knew that this intellectual knowledge was barren and stony; it did not feed the soul hunger within him... Under the even tenor of his days there yawned a black abyss of despair... Into this dark night of his soul came the dazzling light brought by the teacher from India. The student felt the heavy weight of despair lifting from his heart. Returning to his home one night from the last of the public lectures, he was conscious of a great peace within himself. He felt that in some deep fundamental way he had become a different person. An impulse urged him to look into a mirror in his room that he might see a new man. There he saw not his own face, but the face of the Hindu teacher... The floodgate of joy broke in his soul; he was inundated with waves of indescribable ecstasy. Words that had been merely words to him before—bliss, immortality, eternity, truth, divine love—became, in the twinkling of an eye, the core of his being, the essence of his life, the only possible reality... He knew not with his mind alone, but with his heart and soul, with every cell and molecule of his body. The sublime splendour and joy of this discovery were so vast that he felt that centuries,

millenniums, countless aeons of suffering were as nothing, as less than nothing, if by such means that bliss could be obtained. Sin, sorrow, death—these were but words now, words without meaning, words swallowed up by joy as minnows by the seven seas.

He was aware, during this first period of illumination and during the months which followed, of a number of physiological changes within himself. The most striking was what seemed an arrangement of molecular structure in his brain or the opening up of new cell-territory there. Ceaselessly, day and night, he was conscious of this work going on. It seemed as though a kind of electrical drill was boring out new cellular thought-channels...

Another important change was felt in his spinal column. The whole spine seemed turned into iron for several months, so that, when he sat to meditate on God, he felt anchored for ever, able to sit in one place eternally without motion or consciousness of any bodily function. At times an influx of superhuman strength invaded him and he felt that he was carrying the whole universe on his shoulders. The elixir of life, the nectar of immortality, he felt flowing in his veins as an actual, tangible force. It seemed like a quicksilver or a sort of electrical fluid light throughout his body."

This is one of the striking experiences cited by Swami Shivananda in his informative book *Spiritual*

*Experiences** while discussing the nature of the indispensable changes in consciousness that are undergone in the Yoga-process. For in any Yoga directed towards spiritual ends, it is the change of consciousness that is of paramount importance. Whether by meditation and concentration or by devotion and Upasana or by one-minded dedication of works to the Lord, the central aim of the seeker is to outgrow his limited human consciousness tied to the senses and develop into larger and larger or deeper and still deeper ranges of consciousness passing into the spiritual. There is the crux. As the author points out, 'The Kingdom of God is not a place, but a state of consciousness.'

After describing the nature of the consciousness of man in all its statuses and the possibility of becoming aware of them and living in them by yogic effort, the author speaks of the experiences that usually come to the seeker in meditation. First there are the lights of various colours that one sees; they are *tanmātrīc* lights. Every Tattva has its own hue. Prithivi Tattva has yellow colour; Ap Tattva has white colour; Agni has red colour; Vayu has green colour; Akasa has blue colour.' To put it in another way lights of different hues correspond to different Powers active in Creation and their vision testifies to the active presence of the Powers in the being of the seer.

The hearing of different sounds is another phenomenon which is experienced by many though

*Pub. Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy, Rishikesh.

not by all. This *nāda* is traditionally spoken of as of ten kinds: 'The first is Chini (like the sound of the word Chini); the second is Chini-Chini; the third is the sound of bell; the fourth is that of conch; the fifth is that of Tantri (lute); the sixth is that of Tala (cymbals); the seventh is that of flute; the eighth is that of Bheri (drum); the ninth is that of Mridanga (double drum) and the tenth is that of clouds, viz., thunder.'

Regarding both the kinds of experiences mentioned above, we must note that they are not necessarily experienced by all. They are in fact movements on the subtler planes and only those whose subtle sight and subtle hearing have opened experience them. Many can and often do go on without any of them. Besides, these phenomena do not always indicate spiritual growth. They are signposts of entry into the subtler worlds. What are most important and truly indicative of progress in the *sadhana* are the descent of peace in the being, specially in the head region, and the flow of joy, a natural delight which wells up within the heart without any ostensible outer cause. It is a sure mark of progression into the deeper or higher life when one begins to feel this calm, peace and happiness, first during the periods of meditation and then gradually prolonging into other hours also. Inevitably, in meditation, there is a withdrawal, partial at first and fuller later, of the consciousness from the usual preoccupation with the outer life and its inner fringes. And as the consciousness frees itself from the bounds of the physical body there is

a tendency to expand, to go upward and this gives rise to the phenomenon to which the author refers viz. feeling of rising up or expansion, disappearance of the sense of the body and awareness of only a big head in the sky etc.

He refers to the frequently experienced 'jerks' during meditation and explains them as 'due to sudden muscular contraction from new Pranic influence, new nerve stimuli' (on the formation of new nerve currents following the purification of Nadis). We would add that these jerks are also caused due to sudden come-back to the physical consciousness in the body from the subtler levels where one moves during meditation or meditative sleep. When there is such a quick transition one gets these jolts and jerks; the remedy is to increase one's power of self-awareness and self-control and cultivate the habit of a slow, measured movement of the mind and Prana.

There is a whole chapter devoted to the subject of 'psychic powers' that are known to manifest in some way or the other in the course of the Yogā. They include the famous eight Powers, *aṣṭa siddhis*: *aṇimā*, power of becoming as minute as one chooses, *mahimā*, power of becoming large, *laghimā*, power of making oneself as light as cotton or feather, *garimā*, power of becoming heavy, *prāpti* power of attaining what one wishes, *prākmāya*, power to acquire what one desires, *raśitram*, power of bringing anything under control and *iśitram*, lordship over what one wills. The author refers to many other kinds of powers or siddhis e.g. entry into the

minds and bodies of others, materialisation and dematerialisation etc., and counsels the seeker to beware of them, as they are so many decoys to tempt the aspirant away from the Godward path. Much has been said on this subject and a good deal of loud alarm raised on the use of what are called 'supernatural powers'. It is time we took a rational view of the whole matter. After all, as Sri Aurobindo points out, these powers are nothing but latent faculties in man which are awakened under certain conditions, under particular stresses of consciousness. If to our normal state of consciousness they are abnormal, they are certainly normal to the state of consciousness, in which they get active. And so long as one is in that different status of consciousness no Shashtra or injunction can prevent their function being natural to him. And what is so normal cannot be unspiritual. If one is sincere to the Call, no extent of exercise of the 'supernatural' powers can succeed in deviating the sadhana. It is only if there be an insincerity in the being, a secret desire or ambition to show off, become great etc. that these powers can become the occasion for departure from the Path. The warning should be against the *misuse*, not the just use of the powers. To quote Sri Aurobindo's reply to a question on the point:

"The idea that Yogins do not or ought not to use these powers I regard as an ascetic superstition. I believe that all Yogins who have these powers do use them whenever they find that they are called on from within to do so. They

may refrain if they think the use in a particular case is contrary to the Divine Will or see that preventing one evil may be opening the door to worse or for any other valid reason, but not from any general prohibitory rule. What is forbidden to anyone with a strong spiritual sense is to be a miracle-monger, performing extraordinary things for show, for gain, for fame out of vanity or pride...As for those who can live in the true Divine Consciousness, certain powers are not powers at all in that sense, not, that is to say, supernatural or abnormal, but rather their normal way of seeing and acting, part of the consciousness—and how can they be forbidden or refuse to act according to their consciousness and its nature? "

There are a number of other topics in this treatise. But they relate mostly to the process and developments in Raja Yoga which is the one Yoga most exhaustively dealt with in the writings of Swamiji. There is little here of the experiences vouchsafed in the Way of Love though there are a few pages devoted to the Christian Mystics of Europe and the Nayanars of South India. So too, there is practically nothing on the milestones on the Way of Works. A separate volume is called for thereon. Be that as it may, the one fundamental truth on which all the discussions in this book converge is the necessity of change of consciousness, the imperative need for the growth of the present limited human consciousness into a wider, higher and deeper quality of Consciousness which alone

can change ordinary human life into the divine. If that is done most of the problems that beset man today in this world of ignorance and suffering will lose their edge and become shadows of a receding past. The author draws attention to the remarkable pronouncements of Dr. M. Bucke on what he called the advent of the Cosmic Consciousness:

"In contact with the flux of cosmic Consciousness all religions known and named today will be melted down. The human soul will be revolutionised. Religion will absolutely dominate the race...It will not be in sacred books nor in the mouths of priests...It will not teach a future immortality nor future glories, for immortality and all glory exist in the 'here and now.' The evidence of immortality will live in every heart as sight in every eye. Doubt of God and of eternal life will be as impossible as is now doubt of existence...Churches, priests, forms, creeds, prayers, all agents, all intermediaries between the individual men and God will be permanently replaced by direct unmistakeable intercourse...Each soul will feel and know itself to be immortal, will feel and know that the entire universe with all its good and with all its beauty is for it and belongs to it for ever. The world peopled by men possessing Cosmic Consciousness will be as far removed from the world of today as this from the world as it was before the advent of self-consciousness. This new race is in the act of being born from us and in the near future will occupy and possess the earth."

So far so good. But for a real and total transformation of human nature into the divine even the attainment of the cosmic consciousness is not enough. For while the cosmic consciousness undoubtedly frees the individual into a wider unlimited universal range, he is still in the triple reign of Ignorance. He has to get beyond it in his consciousness. And for that he needs must grow into the Transcendent Consciousness of Vijnana that stands above the lower hemisphere of existence, at the head of Creation—the Power and Consciousness of the Supramental.

Divine Dwellers in The Desert*

It is said that when God created man—a being unique in all His creation—He summoned all the angels and archangels and required them to bow before the man. But Satan refused and walked out of heaven saying, "Sir, my love for you forbids this." He forsook the Paradise rather than compromise his love. And that is why Shah Latif calls Satan 'the greatest lover of God'. Narrating this legend in his account of the Sufi saints of Sindh, Sri Gurdial—himself a kindred spirit—serves in these pages a delightful fare of history, myth, philosophy and mysticism.

Love, says the author, is the heart of Sufism and Love is not the exclusive contribution of any one religion or country. It is as old as Creation—if not older—and the speciality of Sufism is its emphasis on Love as the sole means to realise God. Sufism¹ is "the love of wisdom and the wisdom of love" (Inayat Khan).

*By Gurdial Mullik. Pub Gram Bhavan Prakashan, Patti Kalyana (Karnal).

1. Speaking of the origin of the Sufi, Sri Gurdial is not inclined to accept its usual derivation from the Persian *sawwof* or the Greek *sophos* meaning wise, or from *soof* (wool) referring to the woollen garment of the original Sufis. He recalls, instead, the legend "which says that the term is derived from *suffa* (sofa in English) which means 'bench', for so the story goes, the beggars who in the days of the Prophet sat on a bench, placed outside the mosque at Mecca, were called Sufi. For, may it not be that the people who sat on the bench outside the mosque sat there not with a view to asking for alms at the hands of the charitably inclined, but in silent protest against the sin of limiting the Limitless, God, within the four walls of a house of clay?"

votary of Divine Love the search is a natural Quest which grows on one; he has no fixed laws or rules to be followed. The ascetic Sufis, however, speak of the search as a Journey regulated by distinct stages: *shariat*, in which the seeker lives in the letter of the scripture; *tarikhat*, when he wakes up on the quickening of his intelligence through the effect of the sacred Word; *marfat*, when he is thrown into the pangs of doubt; *hakikat*, when the doubt has completed its task of bringing down the mental constructions and the Truth of oneness dawns upon him.'

These two are not the only kinds of Sufis, 'unitive' and 'ethical'. There is a third kind, which is a blend of both, and these have a discipline to thin and eventually dissolve the little self, ego; it consists of an initial period of service to fellowmen, followed by a retirement in oneself in order to find and serve God; and once the Truth of life is found and the rhythm of it discovered, the seeker is called upon to return to active life. A happier modification among these Sufis is of beneficent activity during the day and communion within oneself during the night.

The author then draws further distinctions between the two types of Sufis whom he has called the 'unitive' and the 'ethical':

"The unitive Sufi is one who lives in the world and yet is not of the world. To him silence and

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The unitive Sufi sets no store by ecstasy and miracles. It is the ethical Sufi who is impatient to attain to a state of ecstasy.

The unitive Sufi is often a poet, while the ascetic or ethically minded Sufi is a philosopher.”¹

Then follows a historical account of the arrival of the first Sufis in Sindh from Baghdad in the 14th century A.D. and the impact of their unorthodox ways for the fulfilment of the Quest of man which is nothing less than the effacement of the ego and a total abandonment of the soul in the arms of God, the Beloved All.

According to the teaching of these Sufis of Sindh, the first necessity is to have a *Murshid*, Teacher. Man passes through three stages of development: the first stage in which he indentifies himself with everything—*I am*. It is the stage of *kasarat* (variety) when the individual is lost in the Many (*tilsam*).

The second stage is when man awakens to the fact that he is really not what he seems to be; he realises that he is not his body, mind etc.—*I am not*.

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To the Sufi all life heaves on the bosom of one Love and therefore there is an underlying Unity of base. One begins to perceive this oneness of life as one awakens to Love, love for God and love for God in the fellow-creatures. Through love the barriers of separativity crumble down: "The more a man loves, the deeper he penetrates the divine purposes. Love is the astrolabe of heavenly mysteries, the eye-salve which clears the spiritual eye and makes it clairvoyant." (Jalaluddin).

How to awaken this element of love? By appeal to Beauty. Beauty, the Mother has said, is the characteristic form for the manifestation of the Divine in the physical, the material world, and to look upon Beauty—and all that derives from or sustains upon it—as opposed to the Spirit of God, a temptation and snare, is a perversity that plays into the hands of the Adversary. Says the author with an understandably hurt regret: "That is why to the true Sufi, the rags of pseudo-poverty are what a red rag is to the bull, the ochre-coloured robe is a mockery of beauty, and the unkempt appearance and the mien of mendicancy as if the besmearing of the Divine Face!"

And Beauty, Love, Unity are to be searched for not in the forests away from life, away from the variegated creation of God. The whole world, says the Sufi, pulsates with the Breath of Love. It is not elsewhere in some beyond, but "here and now, in our human world and in the company of our family and friends", that the Love is to be realised. God the Beloved is to be greeted in this world which

"is the pageant, panorama and playground of His Love."

Consequent to this Doctrine of Love the Creator, continues the writer, the Sufis believe in a wide diversity of approaches to God' and in the uniqueness of the individual, each with his own stress of nature in the manifestation of God. As put by a Sufi, "None can travel on another's ticket. Such is the journey of the seeker after Truth."

The Sufis on this path of Love-Illumination look upon Silence as the real Teacher. To them, "The Great Silence is not a vacuity; it is full of harmonies and hues, of visions and whispers; the sky is full of invitations issued by God; and these invitations are being wafted by the wind and when the individual receives his invitation, his soul is awakened from her sleep of self-sufficiency and she sets out on her journey to the home of the Beloved, whom she had forgotten while staying in the City of the senses."

There are three factors that lead to this Silence: solitude, pain—the pain of longing and insufficiency—and fellowship with all orders of life. To the

1. The Sufis often quote the story of Moses to underline the truth of tolerance. "It is said that one day Moses overheard a shepherd praying in this wise, 'O Lord, I will wash thy robes and comb thy hair', and he took him to task for making of God, so to say, such a personal affair. The shepherd was pained at this shock to his simplicity of faith in, and intimacy of affection for and association with, God to such an extent that thereafter he ceased to pray. Then Moses heard a voice from heaven telling him that he had done grievous wrong to God's beloved shepherd, and added, 'Words are nothing to me, I regard the heart.'"

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This awakening comes as a result of meditation on the Great Word, *ism-e-azim*, communicated by the Teacher.

The third stage comes when he suddenly strikes into identity with the All—*I am All*. "The seeker when he is under the sway of his self says, 'God is nowhere', but when he has become one with the Truth, he says, 'God is now here'. The phenomenal world remains as before, it is the eye which has been 'winged' with the vision of the one."

We then read in this book, accounts of Shah Latif, the greatest mystic-poet of Sindh,¹ who sang of human love as a stepping-stone to the Divine Love,² of the Tavern-Keeper 'who gives the cup only when one's head is offered as a price'. We read of Sachal who was seized by the Reality in its manifestation of Beauty and Love and spoke of his illumination in the memorable phrase:

It was like the coming of the sea into the pitcher.

1. I burn with love.

The Centre is within me, and its wonder
Lies as a circle everywhere about me. (Attar).

2. Shah was a lover of the Beautiful; yet in conformity with the obtaining practices, he used to tell the beads of the rosary. "He continued these practices for some years when one day he was shaken out of the slough of conformity by the conversation between two milkmaids, which he overheard. One milkmaid said to the other, 'I have met my lover so many times; how many times have you?' The other answered, 'Sister, why keep an account of one's meeting with one's lover?' Thereupon Shah threw away his rosary, saying: 'Indeed, why keep an account with our lover?'"

3. I'de also:

A lover may hanker after this love or that love,
But at the last he is drawn to the King of Love. (Rumi)

Sachal it was who when asked when he was born, replied, "I do not know when I was first born. I feel I have always been living." The author's summing up of the message of this mystic-poet is gripping :

"Sachal has served the cup of love divine to not a few who dwell in the desert and outside. And those who have drunk deep of it have felt in some mysterious manner that they have themselves been transformed into so many cups, from out of each of which one day the Eternal Thirsty Traveller, when he passes by their houses on the road, might just take a sip and slake His thirst. All of us have to become cups—be it even broken cups—for to drink out of such cups has been the undying longing of our Divine Fellow-Traveller ever since we shook off our feet the fragrant dust of Paradise. Let us, then, keep our cups ready, for who knows when He might knock at our doors and say, 'Give me a drink'. And woe to us if on the day on which He comes we turn Him away because we have no cups in the house."

Indeed, "Unhappy is the man or the nation which, when the divine moment arrives, is found sleeping or unprepared to use it, because the lamp has not been kept trimmed for the welcome and the ears are sealed to the call. But thrice woe to them who are strong and ready, yet waste the force or misuse the moment; for them is irreparable loss or great destruction." (Sri Aurobindo)

THE SACRED MUSHROOM

Dr. Puharich is a noted parapsychologist conducting a laboratory in Maine for research in the phenomena of extra-sensory perception (ESP).^{*} On 16th June, 1954, a colleague of his, Alice Bouverie while showing her art collection to a young Dutch sculptor, Harry Stone, handed him a gold capsule of ancient Egyptian origin. The moment Harry touched it he got something like an electric shock, staggered and went into trance; in that condition he talked something, apparently incoherent, in English and in what turned out to be vocalised Egyptian. He asked for paper and pencil and went on to draw some hieroglyphs. Alice noted down all that he muttered and Dr. Puharich lost no time in consulting an experienced Egyptologist. The purport of the transcription was that the speaker was one Ra Ho Top claiming to be a royal personage and his message related to a plant of life, a golden umbrella with white dots over it, which was used in his days to relieve pain and also to fission the soul from the body during one's life-time. Further investigation revealed that there was actually a Ra Ho Top among the kings of Egypt in about 2,700 B.C. and the language talked by Harry was the old Egyptian of that age.

^{*}The Sacred Mushroom by Andrija Puharich. Pub. Victor Gollancz Ltd., London.

Dr. Puharich would accept nothing as final until not a shred of doubt remained. He ascertained and convinced himself that Harry was a total foreigner to Egyptian history and Egyptian language. He subjected Harry to a series of interesting checks and counter-checks with the help of other 'sensitives'. And as things turned out, Harry slipped into further trances, mostly involuntarily and at times on external stimuli. Each time he talked in the same strain and demanded attention to the pain-relieving plant whose mode of use he described in jerks.

The Doctor worked upon this material and identified the plant with a variety of mushroom which closely answered to the specifications e.g. *amanita muscaria*. He had known of the use of this species of mushroom in certain cults of the ancient world, particularly in Siberia, China and the Mediterranean countries. But was it in vogue in Egypt too? Yes, said the old tomes which he pored over. Unexpected contact was established with a Mushroom expert, Mr. Wasson who revealed to him the existence of the mushroom cult even today in Mexico among the natives of that country. With the help of this source and also with the astonishing directions received through Alice Bouverie who went into a trance—for the first and the last time in her life—Dr. Puharich succeeded in acquiring a sufficient quantity of mushrooms of the required kind.

The mushroom was chemically analysed into its three components viz. muscarine, atrophine and bufotenin. Each of these chemicals is poisonous by

itself but together they counteract each other and produce an inebriating and stimulating effect. The Doctor tried it in small doses on a number of people and came to the conclusion that the drug had little effect on normal individuals but in the case of 'sensitives' it increased their sensitiveness and enlarged the range of their faculties etc.

There is then a learned discussion by the author whether this *amanita muscaria* is a major or a minor factor in the technique of releasing the soul or consciousness from the limitations of the physical body. He is inclined to believe—on the basis of the shamanistic sittings in Siberia etc.—that there are a number of other techniques to be combined with this dosage of mushroom. He also feels that there is need of something more before a voluntary 'leaving of the body' is possible and wonders if something like the 'reality behind prayer' may not be that element. He also asks what is the truth behind the kind of phenomenon like the Ra Ho Top of Harry Stone? He discusses a number of solutions proposed by his friends e. g. reincarnation, spirit-possession, telepathy etc. etc, but is not convinced of the rightness of any of them. Ultimately he poses the question whether this 'mobile centre of consciousness' (MCC) — the functioning of one's consciousness outside the physical body—is an in-controvertible fact or a hallucination.

After reading the account by the author of an experience he had on December 13, 1954, when as he was relaxing in bed he found himself getting out of his body, looking at his physical

body from above as something less real and less personal than the body in which he was then moving about, and also after perusing his narration of his rapid journey in that subtle body to the houses of friends hundreds of miles away and return to his own bed shocked by a loud sound at his door—a description which is accurate and corresponds to the last detail with the experiences of those who have had such movements at all times and in all countries—we had hoped for a whole hearted affirmation of the truth of MCC on the part of Dr. Puharich. Everyone of the happenings recorded conscientiously by the author, including the setting into operation of a chain of events by the gold capsule which was evidently highly charged by an occult power, the memories evoked by its contact from the depths of the evolving personality of Harry Stone, the peculiar phenomenon of Dr. Puharich being able to see his friends talking (when he visited them in his non-physical body) but not hear what they talked, is explainable in terms of Indian Yoga Psychology. These experiences are not at all rare in the lives of those who practise certain kinds of Yoga in which there is a discipline to enlarge the range of one's consciousness, to enter into other grades of existence than the material. They indeed crowd upon one at certain stages of the inner development. There are centres of yogic practices, even today in India, —and perhaps elsewhere too—where ESP and MCC are taken for granted like the functioning of our normal physical senses and effort is made to normalise them as part of the expanding personality of man.

ESSENCE OF LIFE

The author of this interesting book *Live in Freedom Here and Now** has a well-deserved claim to be heard. As a sensitive young man he was distressed by the suffering of his fellow-men during the last world-war and he set about in right earnest to find a solution to the problem of misery and conflict in the world. He travelled throughout the length and breadth of India, meeting men of all kinds but without any perceptible benefit, till one day he was told by someone to turn his quest inward and look within. It was during this period, when he was on tour abroad, that he felt in Jerusalem a ferment and a transformation taking place within himself. This ripened into an enduring experience later in Europe when he "suddenly became fully aware of the Essence and Substance of all life that shines behind all things and all beings. This Most Vital Factor which I call Reality, Truth, Life, Light, Love, Happiness or Freedom put an end to my further seeking, striving and struggling."

Perception of this underlying Reality of Love and Light changed his entire outlook, gave new values and established a constant sense of serenity and freedom. The book consists of some of the talks of the author in Europe and America

*By N. R. Balakrishnan, Pub. Viraj Ashram, Dibrugarh (Assam).

sharing this new Vision with these who seek for a new order of life. More and more of mental enlightenment, less and still of less egotism and a conscious enlargement of the sphere of one's interests so as to embrace larger and larger segments of humanity in a dynamic sweep of love and good-will, is the Way.

One of the most interesting passages in the book is the description of his experiences with the drugs which are said to open the doors of the mind into a new Consciousness. He writes: "Immediately five minutes after it (DMT-Dimethyl Triptamine) was administered to me I was almost in ecstasy, joyous and exuberant. I saw the indescribable and the most exquisite beauty in plants and flowers. They were actually speaking to me. I had never seen before such extraordinary marvel and beauty in plants and flowers. When I was asked to look at the fingers of my hands, lo, to my great surprise I saw them as tiny human beings dancing, and moving with throbbing life and vitality!... I felt the weight of my body as light as cotton and throughout I felt that I was floating in the limitless expanse of space." He goes on to describe how in that state of consciousness, time stood (or appeared to stand) still, how there was a compelling sense of the Unity of all life and the joy of it all.

The author sounds a note of caution, however, against believing that drugs of this type can give the release. What these agents do is to set the mind

free from its customary inhibitions and what is perceived and recorded in the larger mind,—what we may call the subliminal being,—comes into play. Not merely 'heavenly bliss' but also hell. "Fear and suspicion gripped me. I was afraid of myself and also I was afraid of the world. This period was the most bitter and the hellish time I ever experienced in life." And he closes on this right note: "The drug itself cannot bring about the inward awakening or enlightenment.....it acts as a digging up process."

THE CONSCIOUS MIND

"The inner state of man is like a house in which there is no master, nor any other individual capable of controlling the rabble of servants that is running it. All of the servants claim to be the rightful owners of the house and as a result of this claim, the house is usually in the greatest disorder, the servants being in the wrong places and doing the wrong work. The cook is in the garden, the gardener in the kitchen and the butler in the stable, and whenever a caller rings the front-door bell and asks to see the master, the servant who happens to be nearest to it opens the door and replies that *he* is the rightful owner of the house." Citing this graphic analogy by Gurdjieff, the author of this remarkable book* draws attention to the normally disorganised state of the human mind to which every one would readily testify.

The Conscious Mind is a healthy sequel to Dr. Kenneth Walker's *Unconscious Mind* in which paranormal phenomena e.g. telepathy, precognition, clairvoyance and the like were studied and the inability of the modern psychological theories to explain them adequately was exposed. The present work considers the true nature of mind, the relation between the body and mind, the nature of Consciousness of which the mind is an organ, a part, the

existence of levels of Consciousness above the normal human mental awareness and the testimony of men who have crossed into and lived on those tiers of Consciousness in different ages and in different countries. In this last sense the book is, as aptly styled in the sub-title, a commentary on the Mystics.

Dr. Kenneth Walker, it will be noted, is a brilliant intellectual who has, in his quest for Reality, fully drawn upon the experimental and analytical methods of positive science with which he was equipped and finding them inadequate, beyond a limited range of enquiry, turned to and found much help in the Thought Systems of the East e.g. Vedanta and Buddhist, and the teaching of Gurdjieff, the Russian Mystic who has exerted powerful influence on his psychological and spiritual development. This latest work of his bears the impress of all his maturity of mind and ripeness of soul.

Discussing the perennial question of the relationship of mind and body, whether the body is derived from mind or the mind is a product of the body or whether they are two totally different entities, the author adopts what he calls a 'materialistic monism' which postulates 'many different densities of matter and that even in its densest and crudest form matter contains an element of mind.'

1. Giving the background of his study the author writes: "Personally, I have obtained much more help by studying the mind from the standpoint of the Eastern psychologist than from studying it from the Western point of view. Nor do I find anything surprising in

What is the mind itself? Refusing to narrow its meaning to the popular conception of it as a thinking faculty, the author regards mind as a 'directing and organising centre' covering a number of functions of which thinking is one. And there is not one mind. Following Gurdjieff, our author speaks of as many as seven minds: an intellectual mind which coordinates all thinking, an emotional mind concerned with feelings, a moving mind in charge of muscular movements, an instinctive mind and a mind connected with the reproductive centre. Besides these five there are two other *Higher Minds* which are normally latent in man but come into action under exceptional circumstances. These different minds have different centres of action in the body.¹

this, for, in the West, psychology is a comparatively new science, whereas in the East the mind has been an object for investigation for at least 5,000 years."

In a separate chapter on the Viewpoint of Western Psychology, Dr. Walker examines the contribution of the Analytical School of Psychology, the differences of approach among its exponents, Freud, Flügel, Jung and Adler and observes: "Freud's method is inadequate for any detailed description of the human mind because it omits all reference to levels of consciousness which lie *above* the levels on which we habitually live. It has always surprised me that a psychologist who has contributed so much to our knowledge of the lower levels of consciousness should have taken no notice at all of heightened consciousness such as has been described by the mystics of every age and country."

1. "The thinking centre in the head, the emotional centre in the solar plexus lying in the upper part of the abdomen, the moving centre in the spinal cord, the sexual centre in the sexual glands and organs and the instinctive centre both in the Diencephalon or brain system and in the many ramifications of the sympathetic system." We may

To put it in another way, there are many centres from which the one consciousness functions formulating itself in suitable forms, here as the thinking mind, there as the emotional and so on. This consciousness embodied in man, says the author, is not of one piece. It has several gradations of being. Broadly he would classify them under the three categories of Carpenter viz. Simple consciousness in which there is no idea of 'Self', mostly at the animal and the infant level; Self-consciousness in which there is a growing awareness of 'ourselves' and 'other-selves'; the third, Universal Consciousness associated with an intense feeling of 'togetherness and unity'. This last is still a rare state of consciousness but to its existence many have borne witness—poets, thinkers, artists and mystics and others who have had personal experience of that Consciousness in their lives. It has been called by different names, as *Cosmic consciousness* (by Bucke), as Impersonal consciousness, as God-Consciousness etc.

Some of the most valuable pages in this book are those where the author describes in detail how this Higher Consciousness opened out into the being of several persons including himself. In some cases there was a sustained effort to attain to it, in others it welled up so to say, spontaneously, suddenly.

note in passing that this system of different minds and their various locations in the body corresponds in a way with the system of Chakras or lotuses organised around the spinal column in the subtle body, as conceived and drawn upon in the Indian Yoga, though the latter is more scientific and exact.

Whatever the cause, the effects have been observed to be almost the same: a state of inner illumination, exultation, dynamic awareness of unity with All, a sense of immortality and sight of Light. And, we may add, it is in the direction of acquiring this state of Consciousness with its innate powers of Knowledge, Harmony and Joy that the evolutionary movement of humanity is steadily advancing.

The most favourable condition for growing into this higher consciousness, says the author, is to acquire by effort, by a discipline of self-observation and attentive regulation, a state of mind in which the usual mechanical flow of thoughts is arrested and the mind gradually stilled. It is then in the silence and peace that ensues that the first rays of the Dawn of the Higher Consciousness are received.¹ Different methods have been adopted in different traditions. Dr. Walker mentions and describes a number of them e.g. Buddhist meditations, Yogic disciplines of India, means of meditation and contemplation resorted to by Christian monastic Orders and the Desert

1. The author writes: "Sri Aurobindo has gone much farther along the path of the mystic than I have ever gone or am ever likely to go...In the *Life Divine* Sri Aurobindo writes: 'When there is a complete silence in the being, either a stillness of the whole being or a stillness behind unaffected by surface movements, then we can become aware of a Self, a spiritual substance of our being, an existence exceeding even the soul individuality, spreading itself into universality, surpassing all dependence on any natural form or action, extending itself upwards into a transcendence of which the limits are not visible.' "

"The chief difference between an artificially induced state and one which occurs spontaneously is that the former contains none of that Divine element which Otto calls the 'Numinous'...no feeling in the drug-produced state of his being in the presence of something of a Divine nature.....(these) have a sensual rather than a religious flavour."

What is wanted to precipitate the evolutionary being of man into the next higher stage on the ladder of human ascent is a radical and lasting change in the very texture of his consciousness from the present mental into the terms of what is super-mental, not a temporary exaltation or self-oblivion which simply upsets the balance struck by Nature in the organism. That change can be brought about by a psychological process of purification and subtilisation of one's normal consciousness leading to its gradual growth and entry into the ranges of the Higher and Wider Consciousness above and around. And the whole evolutionary effort of the race, points out the author, runs in this direction. The Intellect is being transcended and a determined entry made into the realms above it, call it Intuition, call it Gnosis. The author quotes with approval Pierre Teilhard de Chardin :

"Man has crossed the threshold of self-consciousness to a new mode of thought and, as a result, he has achieved some degree of conscious integration—integration of the self with the outer world of men and nature, integration of the separate elements of the self with each other."

Again, the character of this advance towards a higher state of consciousness is not individual, but general, however slow. "If mankind is to evolve to a higher level of being it will be an evolution of the whole of humanity and not of a few chosen people belonging to a superior race. Teilhard de Chardin writes: 'The outcome of the world, the gates of the future, the entry into the Super-human—these are not thrown open to a few of the privileged, nor to one chosen people, to the exclusion of others. They will open to an advance of all together in a direction in which all—together can join and find completion in a spiritual renovation of the earth.'"

To conclude with one more striking passage of the same writer :

"Remain on your own line, but move upwards towards greater consciousness and greater love. At the summit you will find yourselves united with all those who, from every direction, have made the same ascent. For everything that rises must converge...The Age of Nations is past. The task before us now, if we would not perish, is to build the *Earth*."

A most absorbing book in which science and mysticism join hands heralding the birth of the Universal Man.

Fathers.¹ While on the subject, the author makes a striking observation: "The Hindu does not attempt to stop the stream of associative thinking by the forcible methods commonly employed in the stopping of anything in the West, that is to say by directly opposing one force by another a method which can be described as the technique of the firm jaw and of the clenched fist. We have only to glance at a statue of Buddha meditating and then compare this with Rodin's statue of 'Le Penseur' in order to realise the great difference between the Eastern and Western techniques of mind-control. Note how completely relaxed and how beautifully balanced is the Buddha's whole body, how serene is his expression and then contrast these qualities with the tense body, the furrowed brow and the forward straining of 'Le Penseur.' The explanation of the marked difference between the two is that the Buddha's efforts begin with increased muscle-relaxation and the efforts of Rodin's 'Le Penseur' start and end with greater muscle tension."

There are instructive chapters giving accounts of genuine mystics like Jacob Boehme, Plotinus,

1. "We find Callistris, Patriarch of Constantinople in 1360, advising monks to make use of the two very helpful methods for 'entering...the heart by means of attention.' The two methods recommended by Callistris were, first, awareness of the breathing, and second, the ceaseless repetition of what is to all intents and purposes a *mantra*, namely the repetitive prayer 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me'."

their methods of approach and their realisations.¹

In another chapter the author debates on the live question of the possibility and advisability or otherwise of the use of drugs for inducing changes in one's consciousness. He cites a number of experiments conducted by men of integrity with various kinds of agents like Hashish, lysergic acid, mescaline etc. and notes their findings which may be summed up thus: The first general effect of these artificial activations is to remove all inhibitions: Barriers between the conscious part of the mind and the rest of it are broken down and a free activity ensues of the impulses and faculties hitherto latent or suppressed. Some bring about, temporarily, a kind of splitting of the personality into the observer and the observed. But none of these leaves any lasting effect on the consciousness of the subject.

1. The following extract is typical of the mystic Wisdom of Plotinus: "Knowledge has three degrees - opinion, science, illumination. The means or instruments of the first is sense, of the second, dialectic, of the third, intuition. To the last I subordinate reason. It is absolute knowledge founded on the identity of the mind knowing with the object known ..

You ask how we can know the Infinite? I answer, not by reason. It is the office of reason to distinguish and define. The Infinite, therefore, cannot be ranked among its objects. You can only apprehend the Infinite by a faculty superior to reason, by entering into a state in which you are your finite self no longer—in which the divine essence is communicated to you. This is ecstasy. It is the liberation of your mind from its finite consciousness. Like can only apprehend like; when you thus cease to be finite, you become one with the Infinite. In the reduction of your soul to its simplest self, its divine essence, you realise this union - this identity."

"The chief difference between an artificially induced state and one which occurs spontaneously is that the former contains none of that Divine element which Otto calls the 'Numinous'...no feeling in the drug-produced state of his being in the presence of something of a Divine nature.....(these) have a sensual rather than a religious flavour."

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